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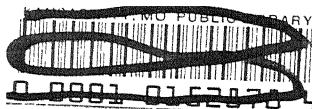
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## THE FIRE OF DESERT FOLK

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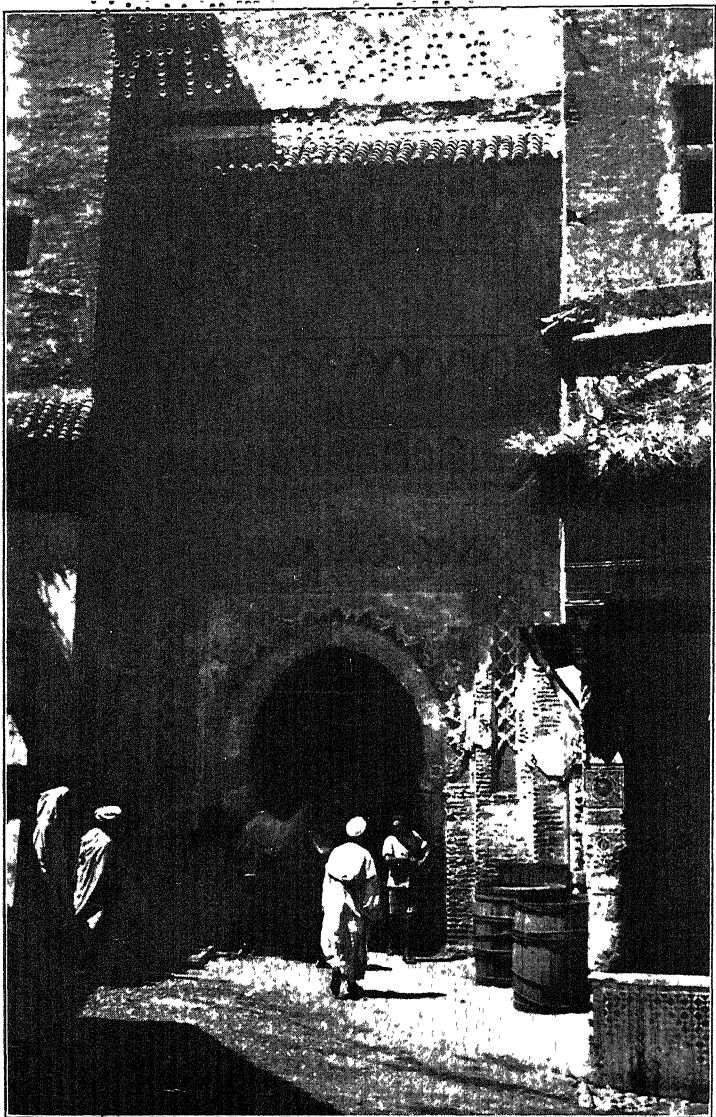
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THE GATE AND FOUNTAIN OF NEJJARINE, AT FEZ

# THE FIRE OF DESERT FOLK

*The Account of a Journey  
Through Morocco*

BY

FERDINAND OSSENDOWSKI

AUTHOR OF

*"Beasts, Men and Gods," "Man and Mystery in Asia,"  
"The Shadow of the Gloomy East," and  
"From President to Prison"*

ENGLISH TEXT BY

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*Collaborator in "Beasts, Men and Gods," "Man and Mystery  
in Asia" and "From President to Prison"*



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## NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Through the valued assistance of the Polish Foreign Office, of the French Government, of Marshal Lyautey, of Minister Steeg, of Minister Blanc, of General Dupont and of other French officials the way was opened for me to penetrate the innermost life of the North African tribes. To all these persons and institutions I express my most heartfelt thanks, as well as to the Geographic Society of Algeria, which furnished me with much indispensable information to supplement the notes I had made during my journey.

The sincerity of my impressions and observations must stand as my only possible return for this help.

FERDINAND OSSENDOWSKI

WARSAW, 1926



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## THE FIRE OF DESERT FOLK



# THE FIRE OF DESERT FOLK

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## CHAPTER I

### STORMS OF THE SEA—AND OF HATE

IN the little Spanish port of Almeria we climbed the gang-plank to the deck of the uninviting shell of a thousand tons that flaunted the name of *Balcar* across the Mediterranean waves and was to carry us behind its tossing letters to French Oran over the first stage of our journey to the north of the Dark Continent. Though it was still summer, the chill of an evening wind that lashed the sea beyond the breakwater kept us moving on the deck as the sailors slipped the lines that held us to the pier. With a sigh my wife remarked:

“That one tiny cable is our only link with Europe.”

Then, as this final hawser splashed, Zofiette took one last look at the breakers beyond the harbor, sighed and sought refuge in a steamer-chair, resigned to paying the price of travel by sea. The moment we passed outside the protecting wall, the gloating waves seized the old Spanish hull and tossed it back and forth like a shuttlecock the whole night through. Zofiette was ill, tragically ill, little comforted by the thought that practically all

the other passengers were no better sailors than she. After a solitary dinner I went back up on deck to join my wife and look out across the foaming sea.

Immense waves, wild steeds of a wilder wind, charged and threw themselves upon the lunging hulk, causing it to quiver and heel to port, with the groans and plaints of an old rheumatic man. The white manes of the waves wreathed at times the after deck and streamed down the sides of the black, wet body. The wind tore through the rigging and rocked the life-boats in prophetic mockery over what it would do with them, once it were given a free hand on the open sea.

As Zofiette fell asleep for a moment, I lighted a cigarette and leaned over the rail, captivated by the wild abandon of the racing waves. Meanwhile two figures had appeared on deck. They stood apart from each other, observing the mad struggle between the sea and the ship and the swift coursings of the sky.

It was the middle of August, and the moon was full. Under its pale rays the sea scintillated with thousands of shafts and points of silvery light, ever changing, disappearing in a flash in the gulf of some dark trough only to reappear on the slopes and crest of a following wave. Everything was in a great, cyclonic whirl, in the midst of which one could feel the unyielding struggle of palpable and titanic forces that brooked no peace nor mild repose.

The sky seemed also bent on joining the sea to add weirdness and an additional sense of struggle to the night, for there above we watched the never-ending battle between the forces of light and darkness. Tattered



rags of clouds, torn into shreds, came hurrying down the wind as harbingers of strife, while here and there denser bits of purest white recalled to one's mind the forms of drifting swans, slipping swiftly down a rapid stream. Only one higher and heavier cloud, darker than the others, seemingly almost black, opposed itself to the wind and moved but slowly, stretching out and rolling up again its tentacle-like feelers of the atmosphere beyond its rim. Soon it reached the empty field around the moon and began to stretch itself across it just as the moon itself began to darken, taking on a scarlet hue as of fresh blood and then changing again to a somber gray, until finally it faded out to a mere black ring in a blacker sky.

"It is a full eclipse," remarked one of the passengers I had noticed forward, as he approached and offered me his excellent Zeiss glass to observe the phenomenon more closely. As I watched through the glass, the moon began to emerge ever so little from behind the dark cover which our planet had drawn over it. First there was but a curve of thin, white-hot wire suspended on the black gulf of the sky; then it glowed brighter and fuller until it swelled to a sickle, to a crescent, a half-moon and eventually to the brilliantly polished silver shield—the pallid face of the sad corpse, the inseparable companion, the *memento mori* of earth.

"A very beautiful total eclipse," observed my neighbor, as I thanked him for the glasses.

His remark gave me a second in which to scrutinize his features and observe his dress. He was an officer of the Spanish Navy, young, good looking, strong of build, with dark complexion and with bold eyes which

surely had seen death—for I know such eyes and would recognize them among thousands of others that had not seen the Reaper at his work.

"You are on your way to the war?" I asked, pointing toward the south.

"Yes, I am rejoining my ship. We are going to bombard the left wing of the army of these banditti from the Rif, who have had the impudence to challenge the rights of Spain in Morocco and to initiate a war against us."

I was silent, for I knew from the papers that the army of the Arab chief, Abd el-Krim, was successfully pushing the Spaniards northward out of their Moroccan territory, a fact that was greatly troubling the Madrid government.

"Look upon this sea," the officer tragically whispered, as his eyes traveled out across the ranks of the white-crested waves that were hurrying on as though for some great attack. "Look and reflect. Formerly the galleys of black pirates and adventurers rode this wind to our shores, where the Moors cut down our people, burned our hamlets and towns and carried off many prisoners. The men among these mostly perished, chained to the rowing-benches of galleys and brigantines, groaning under the lash of slave-drivers and the scorching rays of a burning sun; while the women languished, wept and died in Moslem harems, forgotten, abandoned and degraded. And now in this twentieth century the Arabs dream of renewing again this Moslem domination. We know it and we realize that now we must once more, once for all put an end to such barbarous dreams."

He pronounced this with force and conviction, was silent for a moment and then, with a "good night," turned and went to his cabin, for at dawn he was to land at Melilla, where his ship was lying.

Left alone and finding my wife was still asleep, I lighted another cigarette and sat down on a bench near the entrance to the saloon. In a few moments the second of the passengers I had seen came and took a place beside me. He was obviously an Arab, a fact which European dress could not disguise and which was soon confirmed by the Arab inscriptions tattooed on his forearm, that were revealed as he raised his hand to light a cigarette.

"Where are you bound?" I asked.

"To Oran," he answered, politely raising his hat. The greeting over, he began to laugh softly and, seeing the question in my eyes, observed significantly:

"I can well surmise what the officer who just left you has been saying." Following this, he duplicated the Spaniard's ideas with extraordinary accuracy and continued:

"We men from Maghreb think in another wise and we are all of the same mind. We gave the Spaniards civilization; we infused new and vigorous blood into their race; we were worthy adversaries on the sea and on land. Later they penetrated to the heart of our country and took a great part of it. With an iron hand, much harder and more merciless than had been the hands of the Moorish kings of Granada, Cordova and Seville, they gripped our throats, throttled and persecuted us and now despise us as dogs, as slaves from the most despicious

able and untutored tribes. This cannot last longer! We must have our rights, our liberty and our creed everywhere in Africa, where at each dawn and sunset the Faithful call upon the name of the Prophet."

Hearing my wife's voice, I excused myself and went to her. When I returned the bench was empty. I sat down, however, and began to reflect upon the great human tragedy, the eternal, historic tragedy whose author is Hate, whose leading rôles are played by tribes, peoples, races, cults, merchants, diplomats, parliaments and kings, and the performances of which have continued without interruption through the centuries from the dawn of communal life in the dens of the cavemen down to the days of magnificent palaces of powerful dynasties.

I have come to know intimately wild and half-wild tribes of various colors on three continents. I know their dreams of liberty and independence and, although I realize full well that these, if immediately achieved, would bring them degeneration and death, from which the engrafted European civilization, though often fostered by unwarranted measures, protects them, I thought, in spite of this conviction, that there ought to be some means of saving civilization other than these old and accepted ones, which yield many a full harvest of results but contaminate them with the poisonous weeds of hate.

These thoughts were suddenly interrupted by a short, sharp blast of a ship's whistle, followed by the answering roar from the brass cylinder of the *Balear*. On the bridge the Captain shouted a command, and I heard the noise of running sailors. The engines stopped, and in a moment the ship rolled helplessly in the troughs and

over the racing waves. Out of the darkness to port the form of a Spanish scouting torpedo-boat without lights slid abreast of us and, after a short exchange of electric signals, disappeared again into the night. The engines were started, and the *Balear* continued her journey.

Sitting in a deck-chair near my wife, I remained awake throughout the night and watched all that was happening now within our range. At intervals before the dawn I followed long moving shafts of light which, with a sort of timorous curiosity, seemed to be searching for something in the sky and on the sea. They were the rays from huge searchlights located on the mountains above Melilla, the Spanish port in Morocco where we were to lower anchor in the early morning.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HEIRS OF PHOENICIA

AS the first pale, gray outriders of the dawn began to charge and scatter the black forces of night, we came upon some feluccas, which in the distance appeared like large birds, rising for flight but with only one wing, the other being maimed and motionless. It was nearly eight o'clock, and after the struggle I had had to obtain a cup of coffee and a microscopic breakfast, which was quite inadequate for me under the bracing influence of the sea, that I saw from a distance the golden shore of Africa, bathed in the rays of the morning sun. The cliffs, the mountain-range raising itself farther away, the white buildings and the fortress wall were all flooded with the same rosy, molten hue, making a beautiful canvas with a background of pale, blue sky.

"Melilla," volunteered my officer acquaintance of yesterday.

As we approached the entrance to the harbor, I made out with ever-increasing distinctness dull noises and rumblings. Taking my powerful field-glasses, I began to examine the city and the shore of this new continent. Soon the reason for the noise became apparent in the work which the Spaniards were doing to enlarge and improve this harbor which is so important for both their commerce and their navy. They were building a new

breakwater to enclose a suitable anchorage for their ships, and already the wall of immense rocks and great blocks of cement was protruding far into the sea. At short intervals carloads of material were run out to the end of the new construction and were dumped into the water, making the dull, thundering reports that carried out to us on the deck of the *Balear*. Yet over and above this other sounds, distant rumblings and roarings, were distinctly heard. Unable to catch any indication for the reason of them, I turned to the officer to ask what they might be.

"It is the booming of cannon and the bursting of shells behind that naked range of mountains," he explained. "Abd el-Krim, who has raised the war against us in the Rif, has succeeded in stirring up our eternal enemies, the Berber tribes of Gwelaia and Kebdana, whose lands lie near Melilla; and now we are compelled to subdue them to maintain free communication with the central portions of our colony."

Meantime we slipped into port. The first object that attracted our attention was an unkempt-looking tramp, smothered under a deck cargo of baled hay that ran half-way up the masts and, for some reason, gave her a bad list to port. Her crew were frantically throwing overboard this cargo that seemed to be threatening her. In the eastern sector of the port lay several men-o'-war and two big transports unloading artillery, small-arms ammunition and endless cases of provisions for the soldiers. After fulfilling certain customs formalities, our *Balear* crawled close to the shore and grappled Africa with four strong cables.

Now that the pitching and rolling had ceased, Zofiette rose from her deck-chair of unhallowed memories and went to the cabin, from where she soon emerged freshly gowned and quite herself again. As we had three hours in port, we went off in search of a good restaurant, found what we were seeking, enjoyed our breakfast with that inimitable gusto of a first meal on shore and then sallied forth to visit the town.

The city is made up of two distinct sections, the old town, built in the sixteenth century, where we found fortified houses clustered together without order along the top of the cliff and enclosed within a powerful wall; and the new town, stretching away from the foot of the cliff, built also without form or plan but indicating wealth and a spirit of enterprise. This new town of Melilla is one of the principal centers of the military power of Spain in Africa and a place of much commercial importance.

Officers and soldiers swarmed the numerous restaurants, cafés and bars, eating and drinking, smoking and talking loudly, revealing clearly by their manner that we were in the war zone. Arabs, swathed in bournouses, threaded their way through this crowd of uniformed men, looking into every corner, observing and listening to everything that was going on. Surely Abd el-Krim, the mad chieftain of the Rif, had here in the streets of Melilla many of his spies and intelligence officers. A great contrast to these Arabs in their desert costume was blatantly present in the sumptuous cars that rolled up before the houses of the local industrial potentates.

Centuries ago the Phoenicians, lured by the riches of



the peninsula, founded the colony of Rusaddir, which afterwards became a possession of the Carthaginians, only to pass in time to the Berbers. With the turning of Fortune's wheel, Spain wrested Melilla and its riches from the Berbers, paying for this deed with the regular tribute of her blood. Through all ages it has been the deposits of iron, zinc and lead ores that have lured outsiders to the peninsula.<sup>1</sup> It is said that the Phoenicians, after the founding of Rusaddir, made from this base bold expeditions farther to the west and reached the southern shore of Spain, where they found deposits of quicksilver and sulphur, which they carried back with them to the East, the first for the priests and magi, the second for sale to pirates, who prepared from it flaming arrows to set fire to the enemy's ships.

Before going back on board, we visited the large Hernandez Park, filled with beautiful palms of many varieties and some fine specimens of Araucaria. But the burning heat drove us to seek shelter in a café behind ices and iced drinks until it was time to return to the *Balear*.

We were hardly under way when we heard a great uproar in the steerage. It turned out that one of the passengers, who had been spending the hours on shore, had forgotten her little son and daughter and had just waked to the fact that they were not on board. The rattle-headed mother was finally consoled by the assur-

<sup>1</sup> In 1923, roughly 330,000 tons of various ores were exported from Melilla. The iron ore of the place, a hematite, carries 56% of iron, 3 to 10% of silicon dioxid and about 2.25% of phosphorus. The lead ore, galenite, yields approximately 75% of lead. Zinc ore is found as calamine, a very convenient form for metallurgical processes.

ance of the officers that the next ship, leaving two days later, would bring them safely to Oran.

The wind had subsided and the weather was clear, so that the *Balear* lost her playful character of a shuttlecock of the waves and drove rapidly and proudly eastward with the seriousness and measured movements of a great liner, carrying us close to the sandy shores, behind which we saw for a moment Mar Chica, a small landlocked arm of the sea, separated from it by a long, sandy spit. Then we passed between Cabo del Agua, which is the most northerly flying buttress of the range of Jebel Kebdana, and the three islands of the Zaffarin group, which call to mind the terrible Turkish pirate, Jafar. According to one of the legends of the Kebdana tribe, Allah, when passing judgment upon Jafar after his death, sought to know how many tears the victims of the pirate had shed and asked the angel Azrael to give him some measure of these. To do this the angel separated Mar Chica from the sea and bade His Master look. As a sea it is not of great dimensions; but as a reservoir of tears it typifies ineffable grief and crimes enough to condemn the doer of them to endless hells of burning pitch and sulphur.

The Zaffarins have no water and consequently no vegetation. The supply for the inhabitants is brought out by a special tank-ship. The Spaniards have joined two of the islands by a sea-wall and have thus made an excellent harbor, well sheltered from the open sea and of great strategic importance, as it lies exactly opposite the mouth of the Muluya River, which is the frontier between the Moroccan territories of France and Spain. The house of the governor, the barracks of the garrison,

the church, the hospital and the fishing hamlets are on these two islands. On the third is the cemetery.

To the starboard we were now passing Cape Milonia, which is already within the bournes of the Algerian territory. Soon the low, flat shores disappeared and yielded to the towering wall of the Tajera range, which dominated the horizon.

As night wore on, we had a glimpse of the beacon on Rashgun Island, and later, with the coming of dawn, we skirted along the rocky, bay-indented isles of Habibas, carrying great scars from their struggles with the waves, and entered the strait between the two capes, Falcon and Mers el-Kebir, whose powerful beacons had guided us forward through the last hours of the night. To the eastward of the southern point the Bay of Oran cut its way into the line of the shore, deep and always calm. But Oran itself was not visible for some time, only clusters of small houses here and there dotting the mountainous shores. These surely could not be Oran, one of the largest French towns in Africa with a population of some two hundred thousand souls.

I was about to phrase this question in my mind to a fellow-passenger when suddenly a high mountain with rocky, precipitous sides came into view. On a naked rock at the top of a precipice overhanging the sea a church, surmounted by a statue of Our Lady, stood out in bold relief. It was erected during a devastating cholera epidemic brought here in 1849 by Arabian pilgrims from Asia Minor, who wanted to round out their pilgrimage to Mecca by a visit to the tomb of the sage and saint, Sidi Abd el-Kader el-Jilani, in the neighbor-

hood of Oran. The rock on which the church is built is a part of Mount Murjajo, whose summit, Aidour, is crowned with the walls, pinnacles, bastions and towers of the powerful Spanish castle of Santa Cruz. A forest of Syrian pines covers the whole mountain, whose sides are cut by excellent roads for motor cars and by numerous trails for lovers of mountain climbing and are dotted with many vantage points, from where, as we later learned, one unfolds views of the sea, the bay and the town, each more lovely and enthusing than the last.

We continued for some time with the towering Santa Cruz to starboard, until suddenly from behind a headland appeared a large town, dazzling white under the rays of the August sun and set with emerald oases of parks, squares and palm-lined avenues that climbed higher and higher to the residential district with its mansions, church steeples and dome-crowned mosques.

A strange peace, a faith in the future and a sense of gaiety reflected out from this silvery white town, so strongly that, as I chanced to turn and raise my eyes to the fortress of Santa Cruz, my mood of pleasant expectation gave place to a strange, uncongenial chill. I pondered for a moment over this unusual impression and was soon able to clothe it in a logical form.

I realized that I had before me two cultures, two psychologies, two systems of colonization—Spain with her severe, intransigent Catholicism of the Inquisition, with her proud kings, her bloody *conquistadores*, her mob despising people of another faith or color; the Spain of violence, of bloodshed and destruction; the ancient Spain, of which nothing remains save tradition, story and the

hatred of the peoples whom she had formerly conquered. This Spain had her abode there on the summit of Murjajo, and she died and is buried there in the lowering sarcophagus of Santa Cruz, while beside it France smiles gaily and enticingly to the sea and to the neighboring Arab hamlets, to the whole world, laughing from the whiteness and brilliance of her silvery town with its colored crowds, its green, inviting lawns and its lovely parks and squares.

France does not care for the eternal walls and towers of Santa Cruz. She seeks only to assure to the coming generations a happy life in this sunny land; and, when natives grumble and threaten, the Frenchman answers, with a smile and an innate, unfeigned gaiety:

"Gentlemen, we spend lavishly and we bring you a true civilization and culture without which your 'liberty' would be that of the animals that roam your forests and would result in the same strife that is their lot."

And having said this, he turns away to sing a snatch of some gay Parisian song.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PRIMITIVE RACES OF THE NORTH

WE left the *Balear* without a tinge of regret and were soon in our hotel, elaborating a plan for visiting the different parts of the city.

We soon discovered that, aside from this revelation of the marked difference in the psychology of the Spanish and French colonizations, Oran possesses nothing uniquely distinctive or particularly interesting. First of all, there are no real Arabs in the town, as I cannot accept as such the black gentlemen wearing French shoes from Raoul and fantastically large trousers with vests and coats to match, even though they do sport bournouses and extraordinarily high, large hats of multicolored straw. Moreover, they get drunk in the bars and small cafés on aniseed brandy.

The miserable Arab quarter of the town, the so-called "*village nègre*," with its small, low and terribly dirty, evil-smelling houses and its miniature market-place, where heaps of things that seem to have no possible value or use anywhere in the world are exhibited for sale alongside the fruit and vegetables, has not the faintest resemblance to Moorish towns, even the smallest ones. It gives one the feeling that the French purposely left

this pseudo-Arab quarter to prove that sympathy is possible between themselves and Islam.

These so-called Arabs of the Oran streets are either the local nabobs or neighboring landowners, possessing larger or smaller holdings. Both are totally under the influence of the French civilization, and for the excellent red wine of the region, the Royal Kebir, they are willing to disregard even the laws of the Koran.

In the Arab quarter lives an agglomeration of individuals from many different tribes and of shelterless beggars, pariahs and human flotsam, scavenging birds living from day to day, sometimes dangerous species of these, though such are rare under the energetic and successful hunting of their kind by the police.

When my wife and I sought for a place where we could hear native music and songs and see the native dances, we found a most unprepossessing den, where a whole sanitary corps should have first been set at work to blaze the way for us. It was a high price for my wife to pay, but she had come to Africa with the very definite purpose of studying the native tribal music and of searching it out in all its forms. We were met by two big, strong and over-familiar men, who piloted us to a small room with only one narrow window and ushered us to seats on a big chest, covered with a cushion that had long ago earned its right to retire from further service. Then the dancing-women entered, in multi-colored dresses and with innumerable jewels and trinkets about their necks and in their ears and hair. Observing these gaudy decorations, I recognized them as coming from the neighborhood of the Gare de l'Est, where numerous factories

turning out this sort of jewelry and bizarre ornaments are to be found. The women wore no veils and had their eyes heavily underlined with black and their eyebrows brought together in one continuous dark line.

Their painted cheeks and lips and the circles, zigzags, arrows and squares tattooed all over their faces, made such a vivid picture that I started to photograph them, but was rewarded only by the precipitate flight of all save a single young and supple woman with a sharp, rapacious expression. When I sought the reason for this miniature hegira, one of the men explained that the ordinary Moslem believes that to have one's picture taken brings misfortune and sickness and that consequently only the young dancer and they, the men, could be snapped,

"Are you, then, not followers of the Prophet?" He shrugged his shoulders and answered:

"Yes, though not of Mahomet but of Ben Sliman. We belong to the Mlaina tribe."

I did not then understand the full significance of his explanation and only later learned the interesting and curious facts needed to elucidate it. In the south of Oran province and in other parts of the French possessions in North Africa there exist several tribes who are despised by the real Moslems but who, at the same time, inspire in their more orthodox brothers a mystic awe. It seems not yet to have been thoroughly established just what the extraction of these tribes really is, whether they migrated from Asia or are indigenous to Africa. They were formally followers of Islam, but their prophet is Omar ben Sliman, who is said to have been a renegade



Jew that revised the text of the Koran, debauched the ritual and customs of Islam and left to the tribes who recognized him as their prophet a body of magic practices, which are carried out as well by the women—dancers, singers and witches—as by certain of the men, who exercise their art as sorcerers or makers of talismans. It is even said that the *Mlaina* are really a Gipsy tribe.

Such was the enigmatical company that Zofiette and I met in the *village nègre*, when we as yet knew nothing about the mysterious *Mlaina* and consequently asked no further questions, only photographing the trio and directing them to proceed with the dance for which they had been promised their twenty francs. One of the men took from his belt a flute and began to play a weird, plaintive tune replete with long-drawn monotonous notes, while the other beat the measure by clapping his hands and the woman sang some verses of a far-from-inspiring song, executing after each some movements of their native dance, among them the now-classical “shimmy,” which had its origin in the Gipsy *corenta*. The whole performance was tedious, ugly and uninteresting, so that we were soon glad to get away from the malodorous temple of the Oran Terpsichore.

After this disillusionment we searched no further in Oran for glimpses of the Arab life, unless we count as such the very different visit to the large mosque of Jama el-Pasha, which was erected in the eighteenth century with the money received as ransom for the Christian slaves in commemoration of the expulsion of the Spaniards from Oran. There in the shaded court of the

mosque, where a fountain gurgled low into a marble basin filled with goldfish, an old muezzin with a face that showed much suffering related in excellent French this story of its origin. Near the fountain lay a beggar in rags, with his swollen face covered by sores and with scores of flies swarming over him. Heedless of these and of all life's other minor worries, he slept peacefully in the shadow of the palms, lulled by the rhythm of the mountain stream that found its way beneath the walls and streets of the city to this quiet fountain.

We remained in Oran for some days and visited all the different parts of the city, the usual French town with its inevitable Boulevard National, its Place d'Armes, Place Kléber and Place de la République. To see these it is not worth while to go to Oran, to suffer from seasickness and to be melted and fried by the African summer sun. However, the Promenade de Létang is very picturesque with its terraces and its Chateau Neuf, whose old walls enclose what are now military buildings but which served in earlier days as the palace of the relentless Spanish governor or of the pirate beys of Oran. In Létang Park we saw beautiful specimens of magnolias and fig trees, the latter with twisting branches that resembled some writhing, fighting reptile monsters, and, beyond these, pines, plane-trees, palms and innumerable beds of brilliant and rare flowers. From the sloping terraces of the Park one can look out across the twenty miles of sea that stretches eastward from Cape Falcon promontory.

But from an opening in the north wall of the fortress of Santa Cruz there is an even more beautiful and more

extensive view of the sea, which is also most impressive by reason of the character of the approach to it. This window in the rock can only be reached through a long, dark gallery, at the end of which the visitor is suddenly met by an almost blinding light that flows in, a silent, azure stream, through the large opening in the wall. Sky and sea—two blue worlds of calm and restive power—lavishly send here into the interior of the old Spanish castle their reflected streams of the sun's nectar, soft, appeasing and full of happy serenity, floating in with it the life-giving ozone, the aroma of resin from the pines without and the mingled odors of the sea.

Later we made a motor trip from Murjajo Mountain along a highway cut in the rocks well above the sea, which was blue as a sapphire one moment and green as the purest emerald another. Following this shore road we passed through numerous summer resorts of the inhabitants of Oran and small fishing hamlets, where they bring in large flounders and enormous *langoustes*, the well-known clawless lobster of the Mediterranean.

But along this road to Cape Falcon and in other localities near Oran one can find something more curious and scientific than the fish and the hotels and restaurants incident to sea resorts, for here among the rocks are extensive caverns wherein hanging stalactites have joined with their opposing stalagmites to form the colonnades of mysterious temples of unknown or forgotten gods—more likely forgotten ones, as man already lived in these regions while the gods still walked with men upon this sinful earth. In these ledges one can find innumerable caves and grottoes, forming whole cavern cities, frag-

ments of sketches carved on the rocks by the hand of prehistoric man, the remains of hunting spoils, the stone implements he used and the traces of the household fires he burned. Here beneath the Murjajo generation after generation of various races and tribes must have succeeded one another. To the rocky sides of this range there must have clung diverse peoples and civilizations, whose individual cults and tribes fought for the possession of these sun-bathed slopes, where there is always such treasure of warmth, of light, of tempering and balmy winds from the sea and of an almost incomprehensible spirit of joy that never leaves the newcomer from the moment he touches the shore of this great peaceful harbor of Oran.

What tribes, what races had their origin here in those early periods of human history, or migrated here from other territories, perhaps years of marches from these shores? From what nations sprang those unknown hunters, now returned to dust, who in these caverns of Algeria left great heaps of bones of elephants, of immense buffaloes, lions, rhinoceroses and hippopotami; beside them the shells of mussels and other edible mollusks; and, among all these, stone hatchets, arrow-heads and spear-points? To what races belonged those artists who graved their pictures with flints on the cavern walls and on the cliffs of rivers that have now been dried for centuries? Who coursed these unlimited stretches where the Sahara today spreads a pall over an empire but where once the sea bathed the rocks of Erg and the Anti Atlas? What human agglomerations existed there when the continent of Africa had quite another form and while mys-

terious Atlantis and Lemuria were still above the waves, those continents of which mention is made in the very oldest historic records, among them the earliest Chinese chronicles?

These questions thrust themselves up before me at the very beginning of my journey across North Africa. We know that the Arabs came from the east, were a warlike people that subdued the population of North Africa, which was then divided into hostile tribes, and penetrated to the shores of the Atlantic near Rabat in Morocco. History plainly gives us these facts; yet that was all but as of yesterday, after the death of Mahomet in the seventh century of our era. We know also that all the other tribes which were then indigenous to this vast stretch of territory between Egypt and the Atlantic, the Sahara, the Atlas Mountains and the Mediterranean are called Berbers or Kabyles; but that is not a satisfactory explanation. I traversed these expanses from west to east and from north to south and, during my journey, saw so many different types, judged from any standard, that I cannot accept such an artificial grouping together of these Berbers, even when one takes into consideration the crossing of races, anthropomorphic changes and other factors in assimilation.

Contemporary scientific sources do not afford decisive and conclusive evidence as to the first inhabitants of this country within the period of man's present speculation.<sup>1</sup> They assume that a race, seeking to avoid the desert and separated by it from Central Africa, advanced

<sup>1</sup> See the works of Duveyrier, Bourignat, Letourneux, Faidherbe, St. Gsell, Tisset, Moulieras, Ripley, Ridgeway, Reinach, Bertholon, Deniker and others.

farther and farther toward the north until it reached the territories of contemporary Algeria, Tripolitania, Tunisia and Morocco. They assume also with Tissot that two human streams met here, this one working outward from the borders of the Sahara and the other migrating from the north across the Spanish and Italian straits. The union of these two streams gave birth to the Berber race, which has the anthropological characteristics of the darker types of Europeans and of the brown race of the Sahara region, quite different and distinct from the African black peoples. The white races from ancient Spain, or Iberia, formed a part of this amalgamation. One can trace this origin of the Berbers on Egyptian monuments of the nineteenth dynasty, where they were referred to as "Libou." From this was derived the name of Libya, which phonetically resembles the names of the oldest Berber families, such as Liwata and Lwata. Among the Libu the Egyptians differentiated one tribe, distinguishing it as "Tahennou," which translates "people with a light skin."

Subsequent anthropology and history had to deal with the streams of newcomers arriving in Africa from everywhere—Chaldeans, Phoenicians and colonists from Rome; then a new wave of white men in the Vandals, Greeks and Normans; following these, the Arabian and Turkish flood. Under these influxes the question complicates itself and is finally drowned in a stream of names without meaning—Moors, Numidians, Lotophagi, Gae-tuli, Gindans and Garamantes. Meanwhile the tribe of Nefzua has preserved in its ancient chronicles records of its relations with Egypt, just as Egyptian documents also refer to this relationship. Already in the fourteenth cen-

tury B.C. these tribes, Libu and Tahennu, had a distinct civilization and industry, were ruled by hereditary kings and made political agreements with other tribes and peoples, especially with the islanders of the Mediterranean.

The excavation of ancient tombs and dolmens has yielded no definite answer to this very interesting question concerning the primitive peoples of North Africa, no more than have the designs and drawings discovered on the rocks, which are almost everywhere alike and which must be interpreted or even accepted with the greatest caution, inasmuch as Friedrich Gerhard Rohlfs, one of the authorities on the subject, when investigating in the Sahara, found in a group of primitive rock-drawings the picture of a steamer which had been scratched there by the unsacred hand of a more unsacred tourist of our own generation.

The riddle remains a riddle, however much scholars may try to explain it. Some months after my visit to Oran, while I was on my way from Constantine to Tunis, I talked with a Marabout with whom I had tea and questioned him concerning the custom of the Berbers in staining their hands with henna.

"It is a tradition among us and is carried out in memory of former inhabitants of North Africa, who had a red skin and were both powerful and wise," he answered after some hesitation.

"What were these earlier inhabitants called?"

"We do not know," was his disappointing reply.

The unanswered riddle again! But when I communicated this statement of the Marabout to an accidental acquaintance during a dinner in Tunis, a certain Mr. Charles Grewster, he nodded his head and observed:

"I do not know exactly what to say to that. I can only point out to you that this 'henna' appears to have some strange connection with the name 'Tahennu' which the Egyptians gave to a people living to the west of the Pharaoh's realm."

I often pondered on this striking similarity between the words and feel that the explanation of the Marabout may throw some light on the significance of the Egyptian name. As a matter of fact, "light" often indicated something "sunny" or "divine," hence "men with God's skin." According to their accepted tradition the skin of the gods was red. Did there exist along the Atlantic shore of Africa a red race? Not only did it exist, but it exists still in the Basques living in the western Pyrenees and along the shore of the Bay of Biscay. In an article which I read not long ago concerning the lost Atlantis, the author makes the confident statement that the inhabitants of that continent belonged to the red race.

Although I know nothing of Mr. Grewster's qualifications or training, it seems to me that his speculative, loose hypothesis has as much to commend it as that presupposing the migration of a brown race from the edge of the Sahara and of another brown race from Iberia and the shores of the Baltic across the straits or overland bridges that formerly united Italy and Spain with the African continent.

And all this speculation as to the origin of the primitive population of North Africa sprang from a visit to

Mr. Grewster told me that the botanical name of the plant from which this juice is extracted is *Lawsonia inermis*, which corresponds with the observations of the French writers, A. Certeux and E. H. Carnoy and of the German authority, Sprengel.



a most unprepossessing Oran den, where a painted and tattooed daughter of the mysterious Mlaina tribe performed a native dance.

This riddle, however, gave me no peace and I searched everywhere for something that could help to explain it. Now, when I look back upon the past, and I study my notes of travel and the works of specialists in this subject, I am struck by the more distinctive characteristics of the magic art current among these North African tribes. I refer especially to magic strength, which, according to their general belief, is derived from blood, from all sorts of human and animal refuse, from corpses and from parts of the body; as well as to superstitions which run parallel with this belief in magic, such, for instance, as the possession of the ability to remain invisible and unheard, the union of the souls, hearts and thoughts of two men, the influence of colors on the spiritual side of man's nature, et cetera. Whence come these magical practices? No nation has independently developed them. In those where they have become current they have been borrowed from Gipsies, Andalusians, Moors, Chaldeans and Egyptians, all of whom had relations with North Africa and, therefore, with these Berbers, who, having accepted Islam, carried with them their practices to Mecca during their sacred pilgrimages. Thence they spread to Asia Minor and western Asia, then further on to India and even to China, if we recall that Arabian followers of the Prophet built a mosque in Canton a long time before the discovery of the Chinese shores by the Portuguese. But all this is only supposition, a feeble effort to find some plausible answer to the anthropological riddle of North Africa.

## CHAPTER IV

### A TWELFTH CENTURY MIRACLE-WORKER

ONE beautiful sunny morning we sat in a railway carriage saying good-bye to the attractive little son and daughter of our friends in Oran, Monsieur and Madame Gomis. We were starting our westward journey to Morocco, with Tlemsen as our first stopping place. It was to take us six hours and a half by rail, though the distance was just over one hundred miles.

From our car window, once we were on the way, we could see a perfectly tilled plain, covered with grain, vineyards, fruit-orchards, olive-trees and vegetable gardens and extending to the shores of the large Lake of Oran, which is gradually drying up. Over all the plain were dotted the houses of the French, Spanish and Italian colonists, with their flocks of sheep and cattle about them and here and there a native *bled*. Along the side of the road, where occasional motor-cars flew by, trains of stately camels moved with measured tread and swaying necks, hailing often from far-away oases in the south or even from the Atlas Mountains. The Arabs still continue to use these camel caravans, even close to the railway, because of the cheapness of this method of transportation. It seems a bit of anachronistic folly; yet hundreds

of thousands of these ships of the desert are ever ready to course its billowing surface under the pilotage of their Arab captains, who put no monetary value upon time and who, compelled to gain a few francs for the necessities of life, continue to compete against the inconsiderate and unfeeling railroad. It is a cultural, economic struggle, one that this age has introduced throughout all the world between modernism and the vanishing past. With the construction of two or three additional trans-African lines, the stately burden-bearer will be forced out of his place in the social order and will reappear for his last service in the form of beefsteaks and sausages at the local restaurants and in that of babooshes, of saddles and water-skins and of sacks for dates.

The plain is traversed by several rivers, some of them dry for part of the year but indicated by the lines of rhododendrons, laurels and tamarisks that edge them. Soon the railway left the plain and began to climb the foot-hills of a rather mountainous region, where all traces of agriculture quickly disappeared and pastures replaced the fields. Nomad camps, as I have seen them in Asia, dotted the plains and slopes among the herds of sheep and goats. In some places we saw large black tents, striped with blue or white, and in the openings unveiled women in dark-blue dresses of very light material and decked with heavy jewels of copper and silver in really barbaric taste. The sub-prefect from Sidi Bel Abbes, who had received a copy of the telegram which the Ministry in Paris were courteous enough to send out regarding our coming journey and who was traveling in the compartment with us, explained to us that these no-

mads were Arabs from the Sahara, who come north in search of pasture for their herds and for the ready money they can make through fortune-telling, healing, shoeing some horses and stealing others or even taking part in certain Moslem ritualistic ceremonies.

Sidi Bel Abbes is one of the largest stations along the line, a French town that is growing with an extraordinary rapidity which is induced by the magnificent agricultural development in the whole of the adjacent region watered by the Mekker River. The picturesque little town is smothered in fruit-orchards and boasts some few fine buildings and the barracks of one regiment of the Foreign Legion, in which many Poles and still more Germans were serving. As far as one could see in all directions the countryside was covered with the farms of colonists, most of whom are Spaniards. A Frenchman told me that the second generation of these settlers become readily naturalized and that the children attending the French schools have a very marked assimilative influence upon their parents. This Bel Abbes region is one of the most fertile and best colonized sections of Algeria and sends great quantities of grain, wine, olives and cattle to both the local and the export markets. Big modern tractors and ploughs and other agricultural machinery are to be seen everywhere throughout this whole landscape, which extends all the way to Tlemsen.

Just previous to reaching Aïn Fezza, the last station before Tlemsen, we ran through a number of tunnels and over a beautiful viaduct of light construction that bridges the deep, picturesque ravine of the El-Ourit River and gave us a magnificent view of several cascades that tum-

bled between the forest-covered rocks of Tlemsen's range. At this little station we came across a whole company of soldiers from the Foreign Legion, who were there repairing the road, the bridges and the concrete drains. Their bodies looked healthy, their faces sunburned and showing no signs of tropical languor, but their eyes were dull and distrustful. In the mixture of languages we heard Russian, German, Greek and Dutch. We asked about Poles but found that there were none in this detachment.

A few minutes later we were in Tlemsen, having come up in our journey of six and a half hours some two thousand five hundred feet. A carriage and an official guide, arranged for by telephone from Oran, awaited us at the station. The guide was a sergeant of the French Army, an Algerian Arab, Mahomet ben M'Hammed ben Mokhtar, a young but very well-educated man.

Mahomet took us directly to the hotel, a low, one-storied building, rather like a Swiss chalet and smelling of cedar and resin. From the terrace and the windows of our room we looked out upon a forest-covered mountain-chain, a white mosque in the distance, tall, dark cypresses and a large, attractive orchard. Stillness and peace prevailed and combined with the scenery to remind us of Switzerland, of which Zofiette and I are very fond. As a matter of fact, Tlemsen and its surrounding country may well be called the Little Switzerland of Algeria, while the real and more imposing Switzerland of this land is Kabylia with its beautiful Jujura Mountains.

After we had rested, changed and had our dinner, it

was already night. As we strolled out into the garden, filled with the scent of roses and other fragrant flowers, the sky looked dark and very low, like a soft, black cloth with countless miniature openings, down through each of which gleamed the light-shafts of a star. In the surrounding orchards of pomegranates and olives, locusts rasped their strange night-call; through the garden swift bats traced their hurrying, broken flight; while somewhere from the mountain slopes seeped down the wild, unfriendly jackal's howl, to which the dogs of the surrounding town sent back their long-drawn challenge. Suddenly, as by the wave of some unseen leader's light baton, the tempo changed, and from the olive-grove hard by there floated out the sounds of a flute, which formed themselves into a sad, monotonous tune, to which a voice was joined in plaintive words, as though complaining about something beyond its master's strength to bear, sobbing and praying God for pity and favor. Once more the motif changed, as a loud note, carrying distant and strong, spread itself o'er the place and drowned all other sounds. It was the voice of the muezzin, from his minaret calling the Faithful to their later evening prayer and appealing to the Omnipotent Lord of Life:

*"La Illah Illah Allah u Mahomet Rassul Allah, Allah Akbar! (Praise to the Name of Allah. God is One and God is God!)"*

Finally now, we are in the land of Islam, impressive with the worship of today and filled with the tradition and stories of its ancient saints and sages.

In 1141, during an athletic contest in Seville, Choib ibn Husein el-Andalosi, a youth of fifteen, distinguished

himself for his remarkable strength. With one stroke of the sword and with extraordinary dexterity as well as power he severed the heads of horses and bulls from their bodies; he broke horseshoes and snapped chains with equal ease. The king, Ali ibn Yusuf ibn Teshufin of the magnificent Almoravide dynasty, deigned to be astonished and summoned the boy's father to ask his intentions regarding his son's career. Learning that the boy was to be a warrior, the king promised to take him into his own bodyguard.

However, the young Choaib ibn Husein some years later frustrated the hopes of his father by announcing his intention of consecrating himself to a life of study. When the father sought to dissuade his son, the young man began to quote in an inspired voice some of the most difficult passages of the Koran. Immediately won over by the boy's earnestness and knowing well that deep learning brings with it a long-lived glory, the father exclaimed:

"You will be a *hafidh*!"

After this the young athlete began to study openly the wisdom of Allah with the most erudite Moorish scholars in Seville and Cordova and entered upon a life of physical mortification, filled with deep study and contemplation of the spiritual existence. During the closest communion with his teachers Choaib revealed to them that his innermost soul felt it was foreign to this earth and wished to break its bonds and return to the realm from which it had come.

Then the teachers understood that the young student had been brought into the world a Marabout, that is, a

higher, holier, human being specially marked by God, and they consequently addressed him from this time forth as "Wali," the Chosen of Allah. At his final examination by the Masters, the young scholar recited some chapters from the Koran in such a beautiful and impressive voice that "those present heard the flutter of the wings of angels, who had been lured from Heaven."

Having had conferred upon him the title of "*thaleb*," Choaib crossed over to Africa, studied some time in Fez and then, taking a pilgrim's staff, wandered through the land, until finally he chose Tlemsen for his fixed abode. He took up his life on Mount Terni, towering above the village of El-Eubbad not far from the city, and there passed days and nights in prayer and ascetic practices near the tomb of Sidi Abd Allah ben Ali, a holy and wise man whose memory was shrouded in the greatest honor.

Soon the young eremite gave proof of his miraculous powers when the sultan's palace was robbed and all effort to discover the plunderers of the treasures proved of no avail, until he was summoned before the despairing ruler and, on being questioned answered without hesitation:

"Two men, Oh Sultan, entered and despoiled your courts. Together they possessed but two legs, as one of them is strong but blind, while the second has shriveled limbs and goes about on the shoulders of his blind companion. They are beggars, asking alms in the name of Sidi Nail. If you will send your soldiers to the end of Beni Zeiyan Street, they will see there a ruined house and will find among the ruins the robbers and their spoil."

From this time forth the fame of Choaib grew and



spread so rapidly, that he was constantly sought for and summoned to the most distant parts of Maghreb, where he was accorded unfailing adoration for his gifts of prophecy and clairvoyance. The poor, whom he ever helped most willingly, called him Sidi Abu Median, or simply Bu Medin; but this did not stand in the way of his being considered not only a *wali* but a *kutb*, that is, the pole of the axis round which humanity revolves, and a *ghawts*, or a benefactor and savior.

In due course Sidi Abu Median made a holy pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina and won the friendship of Sidi Abd el-Kader el-Jilani, the greatest Islamic scholar and saint of his time, who sent him as a missionary to Bagdad to teach the Koran there. Here Bu Medin made the acquaintance and gained the admiration of Buddhist priests coming from India, won them over to the Faith and through them spread a knowledge of the Koran through the Hindustani world. In his turn he profited from his acquaintance with the Buddhist priests by receiving from them initiation into a science, so far unknown in Maghreb but afterwards called there "*Mujulo*," which was a combination of mystic ecstasy and *fana*, or the union of human faculties with God's essence, that gives to man supernatural force and magical powers.

From Bagdad Abu Median finally returned to Seville and Cordova, where he became the most famous professor of theology of his time; but he turned away again from Andalusia and crossed once more to Algeria, opening here Koran universities, preaching to the people in the open squares of the cities and in the mosques, and gathering everywhere crowds of followers and disciples. When

one came to him seeking advice, the holy man required no verbal explanations, as he saw revealed before him the inner soul of his suppliant with all its pains and doubts.

Once a rich man came to the Marabout with the intention of asking his advice as to whether he should divorce his wife or not. The saint was discoursing with his disciples, as the rich man entered the room, and, without waiting for the visitor to speak, raised his hand and recited, in a commanding voice, the well-known verse from the Koran:

"Guard your wife and remain in the fear of God."

"How do you know the purpose of my coming," the astonished visitor exclaimed, "when no one but myself knew what I wanted to ask?"

"As you entered, I saw on your bournous these words of the Holy Writ, which made everything clear to me."

Another time a young girl came to the *Wali* and threw herself at his feet.

"You seek to find a young and rich husband?" asked Abu Median; and, without waiting for an answer, continued:

"Listen! When you meet a man whom you would like to marry, give him the opportunity to hear your voice and to see your foot. He will know that, if these twain of your hidden charms are beautiful, the others must be beautiful as well. Go and be happy!"

This clear-visioned *Wali*, sage and teacher was one day summoned to Tlemsen by Sultan Yakub el-Mansur, who wished his guidance upon the important question of the transfer of his capital to Marrakesh. In response to

the sultan's call the aged seer set out at once from a neighboring city but died on his way, by the bank of the river Isser. The grieving ruler gave the holy Marabout a magnificent burial close to the mosque in El-Eubbad near Tlemsen.

My wife and I are just before the beautifully carved cypress door of this *kubba* where the remains of Sidi Choaib ibn Husein el-Andalosi are resting. We pass inside the small court paved with marble and mount the short flight of steps to an onyx colonnade. The *kubba* itself, which we now enter, is surmounted by a dome and lighted through small leaded windows of colored glass, that flood the silence with a soft, mysterious light. In the farther corner rests the *tabout*, or sarcophagus, of cypress black with age, as it has stood here through eight centuries. Beautiful gold and silver embroideries all but cover the Marabout's tomb, near which we are shown a smaller sarcophagus, containing the ashes of Sidi Abd es-Selam. Richly decorated banners, the handiwork of women in harems from Bagdad to Sali, hang upon the walls; offerings rest everywhere, silver lamps, candlesticks, boxes, cups, polished ostrich eggs, even animal bones, which I recognized as coming from crocodile skeletons. To the left of the entrance is a well, with a coaming built up about twenty inches above the ground with blocks of onyx as yellow as wax, some of which are deeply cut by the chains which have raised the buckets ever since the twelfth century. The water is clear and cold as it probably comes down from the heights of the Tlemsen range, and is reputed to have healing properties. Though we could not experiment with its therapeutic

qualities on ourselves, as we were in the best of health, we did find it most agreeable to the palate, and I drank such quantities of it that a pious Arab, sitting near by, gazed at me, first with astonishment and then with terror, though I took no harm from the cooling draughts.

From the *kubba* we turn to visit the mosque, above which reaches upward a minaret whose sides are covered with beautiful mosaics. The mosque has an entrance such as I have nowhere seen in this part of Africa. Through a monumental door, studded with bronze ornaments, one enters a vestibule where the mosaics, brilliant tiles, arabesques, inscriptions and the artistic columns supporting the ceiling give evidence not only of the piety, but of the artistic taste, of the sultan who in 1339 erected this house of worship to Allah. A wide flight of stairs, with eleven marble steps, leads down from the vestibule into the court of ablutions, where the ritual basin rises from the center of an onyx pavement, worn soft and smooth by the feet of thousands of worshippers.

To enter the mosque itself we have to pass a carved cedar door of rare beauty. The interior is rich with the most typical forms and ornamentation of the Moorish architecture. The delicate workmanship of the ceiling of the mihrab, or the holy alcove marking the direction of Mecca, fills us with delight. Generally one finds here only the ordinary painted Turkish plaster. We are puzzled by the large, smooth stones which we see lying about all over the carpets on the floor without any sense of design or order, until it is explained to us that these are ritual stones, which are used in the place of water by those who, because of great age or of some infirmity or malady,

cannot make the customary ablutions before prayer. Instead they rub their bodies with these stones.

As we left the mosque, accompanied by the warden and his whole family, we met the curate, a young, stout mullah with a pale, thoughtful face, pensive eyes and a raven-black beard. He made the sign of the salaam and passed on in silence. He was, as we were told by the warden, very learned and was even respected in Fez as a deep theologian and Marabout.

And so in kingly Tlemsen, where at each step we came upon *kubbas*, mosques, magic trees and other holy places or things, we began our visit by a right and holy deed—a pilgrimage to the tomb of the local patron saint, Sidi Abu Median.

But a few kilometers separate Tlemsen from the unkempt village of El-Eubbad, or Bu Medin. Still the road was long enough to carry us past several *kubbas*, one of which, our guide told us, is the tomb of the saintly Marabout, El-Tayar, who, when in life, never slept but spent all his time studying the Koran, and who after death received the appellation of “The Flying Saint,” as he invariably appeared, when any one called upon his name, and helped the faithful son of Islam.

Near the cemetery, Mohamet ben M’Hammed pointed out to us a large tree, on the branches of which the pious hang modest offerings, consisting of seven small stones tied together on a string, bits of cloth or little tufts of woolen yarn, for the purpose of bringing health to their children. This offering tree reminded me strongly of what I saw in the mountains of Tannu-Ola, Nan-Shan and Kinghan, where the followers of the Yellow Faith,

Lamaism, place their bits of rags and other streamers on the bare branches or tree-trunks sticking out from the *obo*, or heaps of stones, which these travelers erect as a propitiation and plea to the evil spirits of dangerous regions to allow them to pass in safety.

"O Humanity!" thought I, "your mind, regardless of the form of the skull or the color of the skin, has ever the same characteristics, which compel you to follow the same channels of thought. Perhaps the celebrated Abu Median had some reason to think, with the wise Khel el-Konoun, that the souls of all the human tribe were born at the same time, at the moment of the great creative action of Cosmos, or Allah, and that all were encompassed in their infinite numbers within the person of the first man created, our forefather Adam."

With these thoughts I passed on through the cemetery along a beautiful avenue of dark cypresses to the right and left of which were white Moslem tombs, together with upright and recumbent marble slabs, while at different points among the graves were gathered groups of women, so shrouded in their bournouses that only a single eye gave indication of the face within.

"Today is Thursday, and consequently there are not many women in the cemetery," explained our guide; "but on Friday whole crowds of them come here. They remain among the graves from morning until evening; they eat here, drink their tea and coffee, mourn a little and talk a great deal. Here we have the fountain-source of all the gossip that overspreads western Algeria."

As we were leaving the cemetery, we met a group of women tourists, all dressed and bonneted up to the very

last hour of modern fashions and talking as loudly as though each one were giving orders to a squadron of cavalry. Zofiette smiled a bit ironically and repeated the rather frivolous advice of Abu Median to the young girl in quest of a rich husband:

"Let the chosen one hear your voice and see your foot."

"Yes," I exclaimed in fullest sympathy with her mood, "this counsel may have been appropriate for Arab women; but their European cousins often send forth voices which one would prefer not to hear and as frequently allow much to be seen that does not merit display."

"You are not entirely in the right, my dear," protested Zofiette. "See what very pretty feet that nicely formed blonde has!"

I did not want to look, as I felt the whole immensity of anachronism between the silks of the tourists and the venerated *kubbas* of Abu Median, Lalla Setti, Sidi Merzug and many other *Walis*. I lost my good humor—and felt hungry. We therefore returned to the hotel for luncheon and, afterward, went out once more into the town.

Our guide took us to the Meshwar, the ancient fortress with its massive walls, which was formerly the dwelling of the Berber potentates, then later that of the Turks. At the time of the Almohade sultans their vice-regents occupied the stronghold; while afterwards, during the dynasty of the Abd el-Wadites, the sultan himself had his residence here. Following this, the Turkish governors used it as their abode. This was the darkest period for Tlemsen, a fact which the poet Benemsaib made to

live in his phrase likening the town to a "frog in the mouth of a snake."

At present this abode of rulers is transformed into barracks and commissariat stores for the French troops located in the town. But when one observes the fiery, proud looks of the natives and contemplates the great masonry of the walls and the ancient mosque, one involuntarily lives over in imagination a page in the history of Tlemsen.



## CHAPTER V

### THE CITY OF THE MOORS

THE Hadars, or Berbers, are the oldest element in the population. They are mixed with Arabs and are the real Moors of history, whom Europe has many times seen invade her soil and who have brought to her their civilization, the evidences of which remain in the Alhambra, in numerous Alcazars and in other structures throughout Spain.

While we were visiting the northern quarter of Tlemcen, exclusively inhabited by Hadars, Zofiette suddenly stopped and listened. I followed her lead but heard nothing save the twang of an ordinary instrument and a song, sung in a melancholy voice, which came floating out through the door of a dingy-looking café. However, Zofiette continued to listen attentively and finally said:

"They play here the real *Andaluza* which we heard in Granada."

The trained ear of the violinist had made an interesting ethnographic discovery, which had not long before become a fact established through other and independent channels. Scholars had found among the Hadars descendants of the Andalusian Moors, who returned here from Spain during the fourteenth century and brought

back with them these *Andaluzas*, that are known here as "*Garnata*" from the Arabian name of Granada and that are sung to this very day in the cafés and market-places and at the wedding ceremonies of Tlemsen.

Here in the Hadar quarter one can also run across ancient weapons, which the Moorish warriors brought back from the wars or the tournaments in which they measured strength with knights of many European lands. As evidence of these feats and of this returning migration the surname "*el-Andalosi*" often appears in the old Tlemsen families.

Frequently one hears in the Hadar market-place the appellation "*kulugli*" used in contempt for an adversary in such phrases as:

"You are a Kulugli . . . You lie like a Kulugli . . . Kuluglis are slaves, and Hadars are their masters!"

Who are these despised Kuluglis? They are the descendants of Turks and Berber women, white men often having blue eyes and light hair and very frequently possessing bold and intelligent faces. They live in the southwestern quarter of Tlemsen, and, although under the influence of the French administration the deep-seated, virulent hate of the past between Kulugli and Hadar has been largely eradicated, they do not even to this day mingle or hold intercourse with each other. The Kulugli returns to the Hadar contempt for contempt and, though he does not use the name of Hadar as a term of opprobrium, he sings in a way that rankles his vaunted superior:

Hadar, Oh Lady!

What a stupid name have they!

Their necks are the color of the locust's skin,  
While their heads are swathed in greasy rags.  
This is a Hadar, Oh Lady!

The Hadar clan was, until the conquest of the country by France, continually at war with the clan, or "*sof*," of the Kuluglis which often fought the reigning sultans and Moorish emirs. Finally, in January of 1836, they helped the French Marshal, Clausel, to conquer Tlemsen and held the Meshwar against all the fiery Moorish attacks.

Not far from this old fortress the gleaming walls of a white mosque raise themselves in aspiration. Though it was erected by the local dynasties during the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, it held nothing of great interest for me, after I had seen that in El-Eubbad. The customary mihrab, adorned with pleasing designs and oriented according to the kiblâh, gives to the Iman, the high priest conducting the services, his position, with his face turned toward the wall. Next there is the minbar, or movable pulpit, from which the mufti preaches on Friday. Ancient and modern candle holders drop from the ceiling, just as the inevitable columns, rugs and all the other stereotyped elements of the Moslem temple repeat themselves with unvarying sameness, for the established customs of the Faith leave little freedom of imagination to the builder or decorator.

However, in this great Tlemsen mosque I did come upon one new element which I never found in the appointment of any other until I reached the city of Algiers. Opposite the mihrab in the nave of the mosque stood a platform surrounded by a rail, on which the *mokim*, or

younger mullah, takes his place during the services and announces to the people what parts of the office the Imam will read and which prayers are to be repeated after him. This platform is called the "*sedda*," and is to be found only in some of the Algerian mosques, never in those of Morocco. I once saw such a platform, having the same ritualistic purpose, in a pagoda in Nanking, where I learned it was a very unusual feature.

Near one of the columns we were shown a *korsi*, or raised chair, which is occupied at times by noted *muderes*, or professors of theology, who explain and interpret the Koran to the assembled Moslems, just as the holy 'Abu Median, the patron saint of Tlemsen, was wont to do.

Meanwhile, as we studied the interior of the mosque, the sun was dropping so low that we had hardly time to look around the large *sahn*, or interior court, with its basins and other appointments for the ceremonial ablutions of the worshiper. We were on our way home, when, at one of the corners of Maskara Street, we suddenly heard an indescribable conglomeration of sounds. Innumerable hands seemed to be striking drums and tambourines, while another group of performers were evidently playing upon pipes and flutes and a third busied themselves with protracted crying, which the natives dignified with the name of song, in spite of its wailing, sad tones.

As we could see no one responsible for the performance, we turned to our Mahomet ben M'Hammed for light. He smiled, as he led us through the gathering crowd and explained to us:

"It is a Hadar wedding."

Evidently the procession was approaching, as the noise was momentarily growing more terrible. In addition to the regular din small bombs were set off and Bengal fires lighted as the procession came into view. Ten big men, beating upon the drums, headed the line, followed close by ten others shaking tambourines above their heads, all of them advancing with slow, measured steps and with the gravest expressions on their faces. Then came the other musicians, playing reed instruments and banging cymbals, while all were flanked by a group of bombers and fire-lighters. Between the music and the principal actors in the procession came the singers, so-called, who were also hired participants in the feast and who shrieked out at the top of their voices praises of the bridegroom's nobility, courage and liberality and of the bride's beauty and virtue. From time to time the motif of the *Garnata* defined itself, only to be immediately drowned in the general din.

The next section of the cortège was made up of a group of the bridegroom's friends, whom he would feast for several days with mutton, tea and coffee. Immediately after these came a select number of his most intimate and trustworthy companions, whose duty it was to ascertain from the bridegroom on the day following the wedding whether he had been cheated or pleased, in taking unto himself a wife whom he had never seen and who had been so completely swathed in her white, thick raiment that he could not even see before the ceremony the character of her eyes.

What a terrible risk and real lottery are these Moslem

weddings! What will the young husband see when the *haik* and *ksa* veiling the face of the bride are removed for the first time? Perhaps it will be a veritable houri from Paradise, flexible as a reed, graceful as a gazelle in her movements, beautiful as the star of dawn, with eyes of fire, with teeth as white as the Atlas snows and with lips as scarlet and alluring as the heart of a ripe pomegranate. Happy will he be, thrice happy then. But the falling veils may disclose a much-too-somber skin, crossed eyes, only occasional, discolored teeth or purple Negro lips, inherited from the mother, a slave from the Sudan or Tuat. It will be small consolation to him that the black monster is deft in preparing *kouskous*, *seffa*, the various *tazhin*, *meshwi* and other dainties of the Berber kitchen. The poor husband will also not be consoled by that thought that, thanks to the Tlemsen fashion, his wife has not a tattooed face, as have other inhabitants of this part of Africa, for Nature herself has tattooed her in black from the top of her curly head to the tips of her toes. Unhappy will he be, an hundred times unhappy!

One must add that the hazardous bridegroom has paid to the father of the houri or of the black monster a large dowry and that, from the moment he crosses the threshold of the bride's room, he is compelled to remain in the household of her father and consequently incurs, besides his doubtful investment of capital, the risk of what his treatment by the family will be—that of a member in good standing or that of a servant, almost a slave. I read all these doubts and anxious thoughts on the face of the

bridegroom, as he rode toward his goal of happiness or into dire misfortune.

Clad in a white bournous, with a red *shashiya* encircled by a white turban with a *haik* thrown over it, he sat stiff and motionless on a splendid white horse, perched high on his silver-embroidered saddle. His yellow-slipped feet rested in wide stirrups designed for boots that carried large spurs, now long fallen into desuetude, as the Arab of this country has forsaken his horse for a mule or a donkey and traded his curved sword for the muleteer's stick. In the light of the Bengal fires and of the links carried in front of him, the face of the young Arab seemed full of thought. The eyes gleamed brightly, and the teeth showed between half-opened lips; yet withal the face remained only a mask without a muscle moving, with the eyes fixed in space and with the lips as still as stone. Though the horse neighed and snorted, pranced about and shook its head and mane, the rider sat fixed as a statue, filled with that seeming indifference which sprang from his all-pervading belief in Kismet and advancing toward the one who was to become either his *fatma*, his great happiness, or a monstrous djinn, an ever-present spirit of misfortune.

"And now this Hadar will soon come to the house of his unseen bride," Mahomet began to explain with a very discreet smile, "and, while still in the saddle, will try to break an egg with a shot from his pistol. If he succeeds, it will be taken as a good omen; and an evil one, if he fails. Naturally, he will shoot at close range. Then he will descend from his horse, go straight to the nuptial

chamber and there proclaim to the bride awaiting him:

“‘I am your husband, Oh maiden!’ to which she will answer:

“‘*Insh Allah!*’ Then he will raise the *haik* and the *mendil* covering her face and will fill his eyes with her beauty or his heart with bitterness over the deception. After that he will fling her upon the marriage couch to show that he is her master and she his slave. The banquet will then begin, and the feasting will continue for several days. By the time it is finished he will have learned what rôle he is to play in the household—master, son or servant. If he finds he has been shamelessly deceived, he can secure a divorce; but he will have to spend a great deal for this and will, in any case, lose the dowry. And this is the reason why divorces are rare, sir.”

“And you, Mahomet, are you married?” asked Zofiette.

“No, Madame, I am poor and very easily frightened.” Following this, he laughed softly but suddenly turned sad and silent. I noted the very indicative change and some days later, when we had become more intimate with our guide, I began to probe lightly into his matrimonial ideas, as I felt sure there was a mystery lurking near. He did not reveal anything in a direct way but unconsciously allowed me to look for a moment into his soul. It was in a café, after we had already spent several days together, that Mahomet began this tale.

“In the army I had a friend, Yusuf ben Ali. We fought together and together we spent considerable time in hospital, after we had both been wounded. Then we were sent to a French town for a three-months convalescence period, and there we fell in love with two very



pretty French girls. They, of course, laughed at us and treated us as they might have treated apes who had spoken to them of love. Contempt showed itself in their every word, in spite of the reputations we had won for ourselves and the medals we wore. We realized all too well that it was the contempt and the feeling of disgust of the blood of the white race for the blood of the colored man and we understood that nothing could be done against this. We forgot our days with the French girls, but there was another feeling, something even more serious than our love for Ivonne and Suzanne, which we could not put aside. It was the revelation to us of the humiliating position of the Arab women and of the barbaric form of marriage among our people, which is unworthy of civilized man. We made up our minds that we should have wives, not slaves, free women equal to us men, just as it was there in France and the other countries of Europe.

"After the War Yusuf decided to marry, a step which accorded thoroughly with the wishes of his parents. A wife had already been chosen for him among the daughters of a neighbor, the merchant, Ben Assudi. When my friend asked the parents of his future wife to be allowed to see her unveiled and to be permitted to come to an understanding with her, he received a sharp refusal, on the ground that his wish was in direct contravention of custom and the law. After long deliberation, Yusuf finally agreed to carry through the marriage according to the Islamic procedure. Perhaps he had succeeded in catching a glimpse of the girl when she was going for water and, seeing her beauty, objected no more. I was at the wed-

ding feast, and some days later heard from Yusuf this story of what befell him.

“ ‘When I entered my wife’s room, I pronounced the traditional words, and she answered with the usual “*Insh Allah*.” Then I begged her to perform the act of unveiling herself and to hear what I had to say. However, I did not succeed in persuading her to remove the *haik* and *mendil* with her own hand and was forced to yield to the established custom and do it myself. Then I explained to her what our marriage must be and that we must be equal in everything. The daughter of Assudi could not understand my meaning; she wept, tore her hair in some superstitious terror and prostrated herself at my feet—she, more beautiful than the pictures we saw in the Louvre but having the heart and mind of a slave! During the whole night I tried to show her that a slave is to be had for the price of ten or twelve rams and to persuade her that I did not want a slave, but a wife, a friend and the joy of my whole life. In the morning she ceased weeping but was deeply offended. She was ashamed to go out of her room or to show herself before her parents. In the evening I discovered her putting some sort of powder in my food, refused to eat it and finally forced her to own that her old grandmother had given her some potion to light love in my heart. The poor little maid did not realize that her beauty had fired my love from the very moment that I saw her charming face, but that I did not want it to be an animal, brutal, elemental love.

“ ‘Two days and two nights passed in this way, in tears, complaints and prayers. Then I did what every

Berber does—I flung her on the bed with a curse that I had to tie my life to that of a slave. Incredible as it was to me she became happy and bright, though she continued to look upon me as strange and considered me unsound in mind. The family also regarded me with suspicion. Some weeks later she poisoned me with some herbs that are said to inspire love. Then I beat her and left the house.’

“Such was the story of my friend, who was laughed at, covered with abuse and soon compelled to leave our town. He crossed over to France, where he now works as a stevedore on the piers at Marseilles. And this, Madame, is the reason why I am not married.” And thus Mahomet ben M’Hammed, smiling reminiscently and sadly, ended his explanation in answer to my wife’s simple question.

Early the next morning we were once more in the town. This time we entered the Jewish quarter, where we passed through streets of dirty, low houses, swarming with people. Women with gaudy bonnets or kerchiefs on their heads and shawls over their shoulders chattered on the doorsteps, while old men with long beards and grave faces, clad in white bournouses that gave to them a biblical appearance, presided over the street shops. All the expressions, even those of the children, were sad and almost tragic, reminiscent of the sufferings which their forefathers had endured in coming to this land with its fierce sky, to these towns and villages where at dawn and at sunset the Moslems call upon the name of their bloody, merciless Prophet. They had come across the sea and scattered over the whole of North Africa, even to the

farthest oases and up into the Atlas ranges, during the days when Spain with fire and sword began to persecute and torture them, finally leaving to them the single choice of immigration from the peninsula or death. On African soil they often faced a new persecution, no less terrible, perishing in thousands at the hands of warring Berbers, or from sickness and from the killing rays of the sun.

Centuries passed, during which they gained the silent acknowledgment of the right of existence and work, forming strongly knit local units and becoming rich, loyal citizens of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and even of those desert expanses whose real masters and owners are not clearly defined, since the spahis of the sultan or of the bey, as well as the French officials, have not yet established themselves there. Unquestionably these past centuries of slavery, fear and torture have left deep traces on the faces of these African Jews.

Once through the Jewish quarter, we soon passed the Meshwar and the great mosque of Jama el-Kebir, near which we visited the tombs of the holy men of the Ben Zeiyan dynasty, upon whom were conferred special honor by the natives of the Beni-Snous tribe, these purest of Hadars. These masters were the holy Ahmed Bel-Hasen el-Ghomari and Mohammed ben Merzug. We were everywhere struck by the great quantity of *kubbas*, *barakkas* and *tabouts*, that is, chapels and tombs for the ashes of saints and local patrons, to whom the crowds of the pious come for miraculous help. Mullahs and professors from the *medersas* told me that they are greatly opposed to the practices at these sacred shrines, as such a state of affairs works against the unity of Islam and

that they see in it the remnants of the old pagan beliefs of the Berbers who, especially in the higher regions of the Atlas Mountains, still remain under the power and domination of sorcerers and largely subject to the influence of magic science.

Outside one of the gates we tarried much longer, observing the native life in the narrow street where the tomb of Sidi Lahsen is situated. When Zofiette could not tear me away from there, she laughed, saying that, as the name of the saint was so much like Lhasa in Thibet, my interest for things Asiatic held me interminably in this little street of a North African town. But she also acknowledged that it was exceedingly picturesque with its white walls, in some places connected by arches above the white-paved street, and its grape-vines climbing everywhere and often forming a green tent, through which the more bold and daring rays of the sun struck down like blades of shining swords.

Crowds of women swathed in bournouses, the magnificent figures of fine-looking, proud Hadars and groups of noisy children filled the street. Some were passing into the dark interior of the chapel over the *barakka* of the saint; others were drinking at the holy fountain, whose waters insure health to children, or were catching the precious liquid in variously shaped receptacles; while still others sat and lounged against the house walls, talking, deliberating or even quarreling or crying, as was the case with one old woman who, in her despair, neglected to veil her face and sat there, wringing her hands and scratching her cheeks until the blood ran, sobbing, sobbing. Our guide listened a moment and then explained:

"This woman has already been married ten years and has no children. She has made a pilgrimage to Mulay Brahim and has employed every sort of talisman, but it is all of no avail. Her husband is now asking the *cadi* to divorce them, and she is pleading that he grant her just one year more."

In the meantime the despairing, childless wife continued to weep, and between her wails we caught the words:

*"Ja Bu Medin! Ja Mulay Brahim! Ja Bel Hassen!"*

She was imploring her husband's mercy in the name of these holy and wise saints, who knew all the hearts and troubles of men; but the unyielding husband only waved his hand and turned away to the *mahakma*, or the magistrate's office, which was near by. With a groan the woman sank to the pavement and began to beat her forehead against the *kubba* of the *Wali*, who could not help her in her need. As she struck her head against the stones, she continued to wail mournfully:

"Oh great, oh merciful, oh just Bel Hassen! Give aid, give aid!"

The crowd streamed on by, apparently unmoved and indifferent, hardened to such sights and engrossed in its own troubles, from which it sought relief at either the tomb of the holy Bel Hasen or the office of the stout *cadi*. Suddenly the woman arose and continued her lamentations, from which I caught only the oft-repeated:

"Seida Reriba!"

"What is she saying now?" I asked Mahomet.

"She declares that Seida Reriba, a saint who is greatly revered in Tlemsen, has appeared in her house and wept

for her. If you care to, we can visit this saint's tomb also."

When the woman left, we finally turned away from this little street of so much mingled beauty and pathos and crossed to the quarter of El-Corran, in whose mosque the saint, Seida Reriba, is buried. One of the Faithful who were worshipping there told us this story of the saint, who has been dead for centuries but who is still revered and appealed to because of her great miracles.

"When the night is deep, there glides through the silent, sleeping streets the filmy figure of a woman, as light as the autumnal mist in a valley. It is the good Seida Reriba, who is making her nightly round. She enters alike the houses of the rich and the hovels of the poor; she reads the thoughts of her people as well as what is written on the tablets of Fate. Only an innocent child, if one happened to be in the street at such an hour, could see her. Often Reriba enters a house and takes up her place near the hearth, where she remains invisible, even though she may allow herself to be heard. Whenever she laughs or sings a snatch of sweet song, it means that happiness or success are coming to that home; while, if it be sounds of sobbing, sighing or groaning that are heard, it bodes misfortune for the master of the house."

From this tale of one of the natives of the quarter of El-Corran we understood that the childless woman must have heard the sobs of Seida Reriba in her dwelling, foretelling to her the greatest misfortune that can be visited upon an Eastern woman—divorce and after it either the return to her parents' house or the misery of a beggar's life.

Noticing that we had been depressed by this recital and the bearing of it upon the case of the wailing woman, Mahomet called a passing carriage and announced to us:

"I shall take you to El-Ourit and show you a beautiful landscape."

Our driver carried us through the town and out upon an excellent macadamized road, leading to Bel Abbes and eventually Oran, which wound itself up the slopes of the Tlemsen range. This highway overhangs and gives a commanding view of the plain below, that is cut throughout its length by the deep ravine of the Safsaf River. On the upper side of the road rocks of warm pink raised above us a receding wall that finally disappeared in the blue immensity of the sky. Here and there it was broken abruptly by jutting shelves, and then branches of olive-, fig-, plane- and pomegranate-trees appeared over guarding hedges of a cactus known here as the "Berber's fig" and bearing fruit along the edges of the fleshy, spike-covered leaves, which slowly transform themselves into the brown, tough branches of this strange plant, so common throughout all North Africa.

At a turn of the road we were shown the mouth of a deep cave, which, before the advent of the French administration, had served as the den of a band of robbers, who attacked caravans and travelers. The cavern bore the name of "the jackals' grotto," a title well deserved, in that these brigands were a bloodthirsty gang, sacrificing everything to their quest of spoil but cowardly at the same time, as they attacked only in numbers or set upon unarmed travelers.

It was four miles out from Tlemsen that we came upon



a group of buildings and restaurants clustered around the deep canyon of the Sáfsaf River, that falls from the high plain of Terni above over a series of bounding cascades before it rests for a time in the dark, still lake just near the mouth of the great ravine. Picturesque, threatening red walls of rock, spotted everywhere with bunches of tall grass and bushes, enclose the canyon, across which the French engineers have thrown a railway bridge. Here and there in the cliffs are grottoes, the openings of subterranean galleries and smaller apertures of various sizes. Little streams of water murmur on all sides, and the ceiling drippings are ever forming great stalactites, which range themselves into colonnades of subterranean palaces and temples. But the worthy public shows its usual indifference to Nature's discriminating beauty, for European competes with Arab in scratching names on the rocks and in strewing the whole place with the picnic litter that so often converts a wonderful garden of beauty into a dumping-ground of civilization.

On our way back to town Mahomet pointed out to us little settlements of French colonists at Bréa, Négrier and Safsaf, a little beyond which stood the minaret of Agadir. It is a romantic place, this Agadir; for it was here that one of the Caesars, before the birth of Christ, erected a small fortress and called it Pomaria. Many of the Roman antiquities and fragments of inscriptions which are to be seen in the museum at Tlemsen were found here. At the beginning of the Christian era the Romans withdrew from Africa, leaving behind them the ruins of their towns and fortified posts all the way west to the Atlantic. What was here in this immediate region after the

Romans seems not to be known, but the historical records show that during the thirteenth century the Sultan Yarmorasan ben Zeiyan founded on this site a town, which was the beginning of Tlemsen. This was in turn deserted and nothing remains of it save the minaret and a crumbling mosque of the sixteenth century, some canals that were built by the Romans and reconstructed by the Arabs and the *kubba* of Sidi Daoudi.

On our way from the minaret into town we discovered some soldiers' tents in an olive grove near the road and were informed that it was a camp of a unit of the First Foreign Legion. We stopped to chat with the soldiers in the hope of finding some Poles. It turned out that there were none in this company, though it counted Germans, Russians, Dutch, Swedes, Spaniards and even Greeks.

The Russians talked freely and told us much about themselves. Most of them had joined the legion after the revolts among the Russians fighting on the French front following the peace of Brest-Litovsk. I felt no Bolshevik tendency in their words, but I was very definitely struck by another marked feature of their views—all of them were impregnated with a Eurasian ideology, that is, an ideology which has fastened itself upon many young Russian émigrés who dream of the strengthening of Eastern Christianity and of a return to Asiatic politics following upon the jettisoning of socialism.

"Russia must again be powerful; she must lean upon the moral and physical strength of Asia and must not forget that moment when, at the time of our great tragedy, the West forsook us."

In such wise spoke several of the Russians. The Ger-

mans remained silent, evidently fearful of incautious words. There is little doubt that many life-dramas have guided the steps of these men into the African corps, in proof of which it is only necessary to mention the German student whom we ran across at one of the railway stations and the brother of one of the reigning European kings whom we subsequently met—all of them marching side by side, with the same law and treatment for each, across the mountains and sands of this continent, working upon the roads and dying in the battles with the Berber tribes who refuse to acknowledge the Sultan of Morocco under the tutelage of France. But in this hard school of Legion service develop the virile and energetic characters of men of action, such as are today needed in the Europe that is weakening and slipping into sloughs of senility. When these men choose to take their diplomas from this unusual school of energy, they will carry back to their own countries real elements of revivifying force.

This evening we did not dine at the hotel, as the amiable Mahomet had invited us to an Arab supper in the home of one of his friends. He conducted us to a small house entirely surrounded by a high wall with only one entrance and located in the street where the Jewish quarter began. Once within the gate, we found ourselves in a restricted court, off which opened arched doorways, hung with light, colored curtains. Over these were the miniature balconies and small windows of the upper story, from which came whisperings and low laughter, though we saw no one.

Mahomet led us through one of the curtained doorways into a long, narrow, cool room, where we found

great heaps of gaudy cushions, on which we were to repose, and in front of them a red-toned rug patterned in black arabesques. On a low table at the edge of the rug there had already been placed a majolica bowl filled with *kouskous*, the standard native dish made from wheat gruel, prepared with sugar, almonds, figs and raisins and all mixed with a mutton gravy. This is the sweet *kouskous*, or *seffa*, and it is a very palatable and nutritious dish, as is all the Tlemsen food, which has a reputation throughout the whole of Algeria and Morocco. With spoons provided for us Europeans, who were so much less deft in manipulating semi-liquid foods with our fingers, our bowl, having yielded, of course, a liberal serving for Mahomet, was soon almost entirely empty.

Zofiette was already quite satisfied and begged for tea, though I tried also a following dish of real *taam*, or the unsweetened *kouskous* made with broth and vegetables. Then only appeared an old woman, who cleared the little table and brought in a copper ewer full of tea, a basket of figs and grapes and a plate of round cakes, *samsa* and *mekrout*, very rich and tempting, but quite beyond our capacity even to sample. We, however, made inroads on the tea, in spite of the fact that it was infused with fresh mint and terribly over-sweetened. Tea with mint is a very good drink in hot weather and, after the rich native food, is really an ideal beverage in African conditions, if only it is made with a normal quantity of sugar.

After having arranged with Mahomet our plans for the next day we returned to the hotel. Just before reaching it, we came upon a native funeral. A crowd of Arabs hurried along, jostling for places nearest to the bier, on

which the deceased lay clothed in the long, thin *kfen* and wrapped in the conventional shroud, or *seddayia*. There are certain ancient ritualistic ceremonies now in use among the Arabs, which have nothing, however, in common with Islam. To such belong the feast after the funeral and the hired mourners, who sob and howl, scratch their faces and pull out their hair. In the cemetery stones are erected or laid flat upon the grave, after which incantations and talismans are used to propitiate or drive away the innumerable djinns, those evil spirits of illness and misfortune.

The hotel servant who stood and watched the procession with us told us that the deceased, whom he knew personally, had but himself to blame for his death, for, having met a *tergou*, he had neglected to recite the necessary incantation, whereupon the *tergou* visited upon him the djinns of sickness.

"What is a *tergou*?" asked Zofiette.

The boy turned his eyes to the ground and was silent, from which I realized that he was afraid of djinns, the more so as it was already late. After a moment's pause Mahomet spoke for him, explaining:

"A *tergou* is a woman's shadow which has power over a number of different djinns. One is most likely to come upon this shadow at a cross-roads or under a solitary tree; and, when one sees it, it strives to elude one by ascending upward into the sky or by diminishing to the size of a mouse. Then, in order to avoid its baleful influence, one must repeat the magic words: '*El-Khams, El-Mitter, El-Ansab*' and '*El-Aglane*.'"

Meanwhile, as we talked, the hired mourners ceased

their wailing and joined in droning a dramatic funeral song.

Where is he?

His charger returned, but he himself remained far away.

His rifle returned, but he came back no more.

His sword returned, but he himself remained far away.

His spurs returned, but he came back no more!

To this song of the mourners the sobbing widow answered:

My tent is lone;

An unbearable cold surrounds me.

Where is my lion?

Where shall I find one like him?

Misery and fright are my constant companions.

The procession passed, leaving behind it an impression of those earlier times when Arabs, Berbers and Kabyles spent their lives in the saddle in constant fighting and raids. How little they ever imagined that there would come a time after this persistently warlike life when the only reminder of their fighting days would be the funeral songs sung over date, wool and cattle merchants, who had known no weapons other than a shepherd's staff.

I followed the procession and observed that the corpse was carried head foremost, which is not the custom with either Christians or Jews. When the cortège had reached the cemetery, the turban was taken from the head of the deceased and flung three times upon the ground with supplications to Mahomet. As soon as the body had been lowered into the grave, which was done with great care in order to avoid having it touch anything before reach-

ing its resting place, the grave was filled, and the widow and the parents of the deceased began distributing bread and figs to the beggars, following out the Arab belief that each seed in the figs given at the grave to a beggar will lessen the period of the deceased's punishment in the next world by a year. *Mohabad*, or tombstones, were then placed at the head and the foot of the grave. As they began their incantations, the burning of incense and fresh lamentations, I turned and left the cemetery, through whose somber cypresses an evening wind from Terni murmured a soft accompaniment to their final funeral rites.

When night had dropped her mantle full upon the earth and the moon had set sail across the sky, augmenting the mystery of everything around us, Zofiette and I, accompanied by an acquaintance, a French official who had long been a resident in Algeria, strolled out of the town along a road that ran between orchards and vineyards in the direction of El-Eubbad. Finally, when we came upon a fountain by the roadside, we sat down on the stones that flanked it and listened to the low murmur of the unbroken stream and to the drowsy notes of birds and insects.

Suddenly a human voice broke this silence, so full of lesser sounds. How strange it is that the stillness of the night remains a silence, though it be replete with sounds, all of which it absorbs and takes within itself without an echo, yet that it is itself frightened and driven temporarily away by one loud note of a human voice.

We looked behind us and discovered a large garden on the other side of a hedge of Berber figs, within which a swing, that hung from a branch of one of the trees,

was pulsating through its graceful arc under the rhythmic, supple movements of a young girl. She was dressed in shining white and seemed like a water fairy, who had come up from the mysterious depths of a lake and, in the rays of the moon, was besporting herself in solitary play, full of longing and dreams. As she swung, she sang to herself in a low, melodious voice.

"It is the '*Haoufi*,'" whispered the Frenchman, "a favorite song among the Tlemsen girls."

While he was still speaking, the nymph sprang down from the swing and began to dance through a pretty maze of dainty steps and of slow, graceful movements of the whole body. As she moved, she sang again, and our companion repeated for us one of the verses in French.

His mouth is the scarlet of henna;  
His teeth are of shining ivory;  
His neck is as a battle standard  
After a victorious fight . . .

"The girl must certainly love a young man, who has never seen her without her *haik*," whispered Zofiette.

Our French friend, on hearing this, nodded his head knowingly and sang back to the girl these lines:

Your breast, Oh maiden, is a spirit—  
It is of silver pure.  
Your body is like the fleecy snow,  
The snow which mantles the summit of Ghamdov.

The water fairy glanced quickly around, gave a soft cry of dismay and disappeared like a faint, intangible shadow of the night. The spring, which seemed throughout the song to have held its breath, began again to murmur, the



lizards moved about in the grass and the cicadas once more released their rasping notes.

It was very late before we finally returned to our hotel, as our delightful friend regaled us with never-ending stories of the life of the Berber tribes, more than one of which stirred within me strong imagination and an indefinable longing, so common to those who penetrate toward the heart and soul of this country which has been tramped by the feet of millions of conquering aliens, drowned in the blood and tears of numberless struggles and burned to tinder by the merciless sun—merciless, to be sure, but not strong enough to stamp out life. Once let its face be veiled with clouds and a few drops of rain be given to the thirsty soil, and immediately this apparently scorched earth covers itself with a carpet of bright flowers, the flocks of patient sheep begin to pasture and to play, while men, parched by the blast of the eternal heavenly fire, forget the heat, raise their heads and dream of happiness, love and liberty, these most beautiful gifts of God.

*"Msa el-Khir* (Good night)," said our French friend.

*"Alaikum es-salaam,"* we answered, having taken from the manual of French-Arabic conversation by Monsieur Delaporte the necessary phrase to meet the requirements of politeness.

## CHAPTER VI

### AMONG THE DJINNS

THE next day, at an early hour, Mahomet came for us in an open carriage equipped with a linen canopy to shelter us from the sun. We left the town by the Fez gate and for some time rode along past the homes of the rich people of Tlemsen, their villas covered by rambling vines of every description in full bloom and surrounded by well-kept gardens, quiet and shady. As the road mounted, we passed a beautiful building that serves as the cavalry barracks. Beyond it towered the chain of the Tlemsen range, here emerald green and there a warm pink, with its skyline of rounded curves sketched against the pale green of the early morning. Mountain streams, bordered by a heavier and darker vegetation, cut the slopes with white broken lines. At some points one could see on the summits gleaming *kubbas*, with the mouths of caves opening on the slopes below them. Smoke issuing from these grottoes showed that they were being used as dwellings. There was no difference here between Hadars and Kuluglis, as in these caves there reign special laws, special traditions, special saints and a magic art, even more heathenish than that of the towns. Flocks of sheep and herds of cattle grazed on the mountain, while

groups of figures moved about the entrances to the caves, men in white or brown bournouses and unveiled women in dark-blue *abaiyas*, which led one to surmise that they were in all probability from the Sahara.

Before we had gone very far from Tlemsen, we were abreast of the ruins of a city wall with the remnants of gates and towers, around and among which now grow rich vineyards, fig-trees, pomegranates and olives, watered by an irrigation canal from the mountains.

"This is Mansura," said Mahomet.

I had read of this Mansura, in which a stormy page of the history of Tlemsen was enacted. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the reigning sultans in Tlemsen were of the Abd el-Wadite dynasty and had continually to fight in defence of their country and capital with the Merinide sultans of Fez. It was at the end of the thirteenth century that the Moroccan ruler, Abu Yakub, appeared for the fifth time before the walls of Tlemsen and, as though to make it incontrovertibly evident that he had no thought of returning without having accomplished the conquest of the city, he caused to be built an immense permanent camp, containing a magnificent palace, extensive steam-baths, inns, a mosque and other buildings. Only the most fragmentary ruins still persist, but, even so, they give clear testimony to the grand scale of these buildings and of the besieging sultan's ideas in constructing this camp of El-Mahalla el-Mansura, or the Camp of the Victors. Now only the name Mansura remains.

The city had been under siege eight years and eight months, when suddenly the Morocco sultan was mur-

dered by his eunuch, whereupon his grandson at once proclaimed himself heir to the throne, raised the siege and hurried back to Fez to establish his kingly rights. The Arab historians say that more than one hundred twenty thousand men perished during the investment of Tlemsen. It is, consequently, not to be wondered at that the inhabitants totally destroyed Mansura as soon as the besieging forces left.

The strange and bloody events enacted around this unusual camp gave birth to innumerable legends concerning this very ground which the French colonists are now tilling. But these men from over the sea pay no heed to these stories and only laugh at the djinns, who fasten so strong a fear upon the natives that they go with the greatest reluctance as laborers to these French farms at Mansura.

Thirty years after the murder of Abu Yakub the Merinides returned. The sultan, Abu'l-Hasen, commenced a new investment of the town, reconstructed Mansura and after some years finally captured the Algerian city. Once the place fell, he abandoned his residence in Mansura for a new and more magnificent palace which he caused to be erected within the town. Then in 1348, when the Tlemsen sultans regained control, they once more ordered the destruction of Mansura, carried off the more valuable building materials and appropriated the art objects to adorn their own palaces. There among the ruins of Mansura it is still easy to find bits of pretty majolica, colored glass from the palace windows and the mosque and even bits of silk and brocade.

The mosque, or rather its minaret, has best withstood the blows from man's hand and the destroying ravages of time. Towering up to one hundred twenty-five feet, it is of an architectural type quite unique in the world of Moslem Africa. Whereas minarets have usually an entrance only from the court of the mosque, this one at Mansura has an opening through the outer face, which served at the same time as an entrance to the mosque itself. A very pleasing doorway, framed in sculptured marble, is still in a good state of preservation. I had a feeling that the marble was of later date than the other construction, yet I was not quite sure of it.

This minaret was destroyed in a very strange manner, appearing as though a stroke of lightning had cleanly split it from top to bottom. From the court of the mosque all of the interior is visible, showing remnants of the stairs up which the sultan, Abu'l Hasen, rode on horseback to the top of the tower and, as a simple muezzin, summoned the Faithful to prayer. This extraordinary crumbling away of just half the minaret gave rise to a legend told in the neighboring villages, which Guiter wrote down in its purest form from the text of the Arabian scholar, El-Hadj Sadok.

According to this legend the sultan ordered two competing architects, a Moor and a Jew, to submit plans for the minaret. When the sultan found their drawings equally beautiful, he assigned to the Moor the construction of the half of the minaret facing the court of the mosque and to the Jew the half facing outward. The joint task was finished and elicited general praise. A

magnificent ceremony for the opening of the mosque to the Faithful soon was held. There, after the ceremony, the sultan summoned both the architects and said:

"Your work is beautiful. I do not know how to recompense you." While the rivals remained silent, the sultan ordered some bags of gold brought to him and said to the Moorish architect:

"Take this gold and be the richest man among my subjects." Then, turning to the Jew, he added:

"And as for you, infidel dog, I ought to pull out your heart, because you have defiled the holy place with your footsteps; but I am pleased with your work and shall, therefore, grant you your life, if it be proven that this is Allah's wish. My men will take you to the top of the minaret; from there you must disappear before the morning light. If you have not done so, you shall die. Now go!"

The Jew was led away, distraught by the cruel ingratitude of the master. Shut up in the minaret, the architect puzzled as to how he should escape and, being a man of invention and resource, made for himself a pair of wings out of boards, fastened them to his shoulders and sprang from the minaret. But, as he had made the wings in a hurry and the work was not of the best, they broke with him, so that he fell on a near-by hill, which to this day is known among the inhabitants as "the Jew's Hill," and was killed. As he lay dying, he cursed Mansura. Instantly a terrible storm arose and a bolt of lightning struck the minaret, cleaving it into two distinct parts and tumbling that which the Moor had constructed into the temple court. From the very moment

of the curse djinns swarmed in from everywhere and began to pursue, persecute and kill the Moslems with such maladies and madness that none of the Arabs could remain in the place, which is even now never passed by the children of Allah without a prayer or a magic incantation on their lips.

It was, however, quite evident that the family of the French colonist living there among the ruins of the ancient mosque knew nothing of bad spirits. Or, perhaps, these were gracious and favorably inclined toward the two young daughters who served us excellent milk and paid us pretty compliments, as they blushed under the unmistakable favor of Mahomet's eyes.

From Mansura the road climbed higher and higher, pushing the horizon farther and farther back and giving to the eye an ever-increasing landscape. We could see the mosque of Abu Median in El-Eubbad, the emerald oasis of Tlemsen, the towering wall of the mountains, the broken line of the old enceinte of Mansura and the mysterious minaret, where the djinns are so numerous and the pretty women of the French colonists arrange their luscious grapes in the attractive baskets made by the hands of the Arab women from Hennaya. Showing in the distance appeared the scarlet and green plain of Terni and the precipitous slopes of the Safsaf ravine, there where the river forces its way through the rocks like a powerful, blue-scaled snake, pushes them back and finally slips away into the plain, to aid the French colonists and rich Arabs in turning the dreaming forces of this soil into bread, fruit, and wine.

Soon, on the other side of the hills which the road was

crossing, our carriage began to descend into the valley, where we found not only the agricultural station and model farm but also further results of the work of civilization being done by the white man. Black and brown natives were being taught to understand what could be produced on the lands of their fathers and grandfathers, who had in turn taken it from some unknown and long-disappeared owners. The number of Arab agriculturists, Berbers and even nomads migrating here from camps far away in the south or from the steep slopes of the Atlas, increases every year. New areas are constantly being put under vineyards, orchards and grain, side by side with the modern breeding of cattle. The Arab forgets his old nomadic life and is even abandoning his ancient wooden plough for the more modern French and American implements. Western civilization is triumphing here in this African Switzerland, and no one gives thought to the possibility of a fanatical Mahdi inciting the local population, in the name of the Prophet, against the white masters of this prosperous colony. In this part of Algeria the natives will not be attracted by pan-Islamic propaganda, for they see that European civilization and the houses of worship of the infidels do not at all stand in the way of pilgrimages to the mosques and to the *kubbas* of holy *Walis*, which are undertaken by crowds of pious men with all the splendor and ceremony prescribed by the Koran and by custom. This Western civilization makes the outward life of the Faithful more agreeable, leaving the inner one unchanged and entirely subject to the Law of the Prophet and the dictates of his representatives here on earth, the Marabouts.



We passed a Negro village, a collection of adobe houses, more like swallows' nests or ruins than dwellings for men. Little pickanninies of the black parents whose forefathers were imported from the Sudan ran out between the prickly Berber figs that sheltered the village from the road. In the shade of a fig-tree beside the village path I noticed two women, one well along in years and the other quite young, brightly gowned and wearing heavy silver ornaments round their necks and down over their breasts. My hunter's instinct caused me to reach for my camera and stalk my victims, who I saw from a distance were wildly gesticulating and had not yet scented the approaching danger in the already-poised apparatus. Wishing to be sure of my aim, I quietly moved up a little closer and only then discovered that the older woman was beating the younger, tearing the rag of a shirt she wore, hammering at her head with one hand and scratching with the other her onyx-black neck and breast. I was amazed that the older woman carried out her chastisement in absolute silence and that the younger one offered but a weak defence, only occasionally groaning and striking back with little spirit.

What can it be? Perhaps it is a mother punishing her daughter for having wandered farther than the prickly hedge, where some passing Arab merchant or young French planter became enamoured of her beautiful, statuesque figure and enticed her away; or possibly the old woman is the first wife of her husband and the younger a subsequent one. Perhaps the master of the house has for her forgotten all his other wives and showers upon

her all his love and favor, and for this the abandoned mate of earlier years is taking her revenge.

But my kodak was quite indifferent to the underlying reasons for such an unusual scene and was already prepared to immortalize this strife in the records of the age, holding there the vicious, black face of the old hag beside the bloody breasts and the terrified eyes of the young ebony beauty, when suddenly the whole operation was interrupted by a short, guttural exclamation that came from behind me. Involuntarily I swung round and faced a black man, sporting an old *spahi's* vest with brass buttons, wearing a big turban and leading a donkey, evidently just returning from town. The expression on his face left no doubt that he was angry with me for wishing to "steal the souls" of those in his village, yet it did not frighten away my intention to accomplish the theft. But, alas! It was too late, for I turned back only in time to catch a glimpse of the bright dresses of the women disappearing around a turn in the path and to hear the soft patting of their bare feet.

"You vagabond!" I thought angrily of the intruder and swung round to snap him as my only revenge.

As we continued our way, I soon forgot about the unsuccessful kodak hunt under the spell of a change so sudden and so picturesque that it seemed as though we had been transported to another latitude. High walls of luxuriant, really tropical vegetation flanked and arched the road, covering it with a deep shade and swathing it in refreshing coolness. Immense bushes of hawthorne, tamarisk, lilac and jasmine mingled with olive-trees, fig-

trees, centennial elms, sandarico and plane-trees to form a veritable jungle, covered over and interlaced with Virginia creepers, hops and other vines, all ablaze with purple and pink blossoms. Narrow paths, lovely corridors of sifted green light, ran out in various directions through the thicket, that swarmed with wild pigeons, thrushes, starlings and other singing birds. The carriage stopped suddenly before a native building with an open verandah that was carpeted with clean mats.

"You would like, perhaps, to take a cup of Moorish coffee," suggested Mahomet. "It will not come amiss, as we shall be late in returning to town."

In a moment we were taking our places on the clay floor, which had been covered for us by a Kairwan carpet, brought out from the owner's rooms. Under the verandah there was also a group of Arabs, talking together in low, serious tones. As we watched, they became silent and bent their heads, when one of their number, a fine-looking old man with a long beard, began to speak. Mahomet whispered to me:

"He is a Marabout, a great scholar and miracle-worker, and is deeply respected here."

In the meantime the owner of the coffee-house had placed before us a round copper tray, carrying small china cups and individual copper pots with long, wooden handles. For each cup the coffee is separately prepared in these copper receptacles on a special stove over coals as red as those in a smithy forge. As we poured and tasted the brew, we found it to be strong, aromatic and sweet, thick with finely pulverized dregs, really more

of a warm sorbet of coffee than the ordinary beverage as we know it. Finding it was a most agreeable drink, I ordered a second cup.

"Will it not act on your heart?" asked the careful guide.

"Oh, no," I answered, quite sure of my heart, which had tried and withstood all sorts of emotions incident to the Bolshevik régime, innumerable fights, high mountain passes, hunger, cold, prison, opium, poisonous Chinese alcohol and Indian hashish. However, pride ever goeth before the fall, and I found that the Moorish coffee made a stronger impression than all these former experiences and caused it to pound so hard that I could not catch my breath and was only restored to my normal condition after a long draft of cold water.

Just as we were leaving the place, two Arabs galloped past us on bay horses. These men in their turbans, large trousers and slippers are rather uninspiring when on foot; but, when they sit astride their high, richly ornamented saddles on real Arab steeds, they show again their old blood of rider and warrior—their heads are raised, their faces become proud, their eyes flash fire and in their feet, that rest so sure and firm within the large stirrups, one feels resides the strength necessary to back up the strong cuts of the sword, when the horse is in the gallop. We watched these men until they rose in their stirrups and went whirling round a turn in the road. I heard afterwards that Tlemsen and its environs are famous for their fine horsemen and, as recorded by A. Bel, Si Ahmed ben Yusuf, the poet, has sung of the town:

Oh, Tlemsen, town of matchless riders!  
Your streams, your air and the costumes of your women  
Place you above all the towns of Maghreb.

As for riders, streams and air, it is all very well; but, when it comes to the costumes of the women, this is quite another matter. Most unattractive wrappings cover not only the face, feet and the entire forms of the Tlemsen women, but even the eyes. Only occasionally, when men are around, is one of them unveiled for a short glance and then covered again by the protecting cloth. At the outset Zofiette was irritated by this, but finally became accustomed to it and gave up looking for "African beauties," calling them all "bundles of dirty linen." Hers was, I think, a true and entirely warrantable description.

For something over an hour after we left the Marabout and his circle of friends, we drove through the plain, admiring the advanced state of the agricultural development. At one place near the road we saw a long snake that had been killed and had had its head smashed. Our driver told us that it was a *Naja* and that this species was closely related to the well-known cobras of India. I think that he was probably right, for I later had occasion to observe these *Najas* in the south near Bu Saada and in Marrakesh, where I participated in one death-raid upon a goodly specimen.

After leaving our good road, we rattled across the stony bed of a dry stream, dragged through a sandy stretch that was lined with Berber figs and long-leaved cactuses, known in Spain as "*pita clumbos*" and related to the Aloë family, and finally drew out into the large vil-

lage of Aïn el-Hout, belonging to the Uled Ali tribe. It is a well-known place of pilgrimage for the inhabitants of Tlemsen, as the tombs of famous Marabouts from the family of Idris I, a powerful sultan related through his mother to the Prophet, are located there.

Our guide first took us to the spring of Aïn el-Hout, which is a large basin surrounded by an adobe wall and containing limpidly clear water that is fed up into the reservoir through the green clay at the bottom. Water-plants of the family *Cladophorae* were growing in the middle of the basin and afforded shelter for schools of small trout, the sight of which drew from Mahomet the following story:

"You see how many fish there are in the basin. From where could they have come, in view of the fact that the water bubbles up from the earth and does not run in from any surface supply? There is a legend which gives us the explanation. One of the young sons of a Tlemsen sultan of the thirteenth century was passing this spring on his way to a hunt, when he discovered a beautiful maiden with a pitcher of water in each hand just turning away in embarrassment, because she was unveiled and did not know what to do. The prince jumped from his horse, seized the girl in his arms and kissed her, whereupon she blushed violently, dropped her pitchers and strove to cover her face with her *haik*, but all to no avail, as the young prince was the stronger and persisted in his amorous demonstrations. Fearing she would be carried off, the girl broke from him and threw herself into the water, where she was transformed into fish. From that day the spring has been called, Aïn el-Hout, the Fountain of the

Fish, and has been considered sacred and possessed of healing powers."

From here Mahomet led us on foot out of the village and into a deep ravine of the Safsaf River, where we found a hot spring flowing from the mouth of a cave, which was encircled with thick bushes and reeds. It is called by the natives "the miraculous *hammam*." We also found fish playing about in this spring, frequently breaking the surface with their jumps and darts after insects. I later heard from Algerian zoologists that they had found blind fish in the *hammam*, which had evidently come out with the water from its hot subterranean sources, a phenomenon similar to that which I noted in Lake Nogan Kul in Northern Mongolia and referred to in my book entitled *Beasts, Men and Gods*.

As the sun had already gone down before we left the spring and we had still a long and difficult road before us, we scrambled down the rocky path back to Aïn el-Hout, lighted the lamps on our carriage and returned to Tlemsen.

We spent the following day roaming about the town. In one quarter we wandered into a caravanserai, where we found a motley crowd of men who had come from every direction and over great distances, strings of camels and dozens of donkeys, all in a conglomerate mixture with wooden cases, bales of wool and other merchandise. Everywhere about the court Arabs, Berbers, natives from the Sahara and other heterogeneous types were bartering wares, playing cards, eating and drinking tea and coffee. Yet all this went on in a setting of almost incredible silence, quite different from what it would have

been with an equally numerous gathering of white men. Acquaintances, as they met, greeted one another with the customary salaams, the younger ones kissing the hands of their older friends; grave Marabouts, whose hands or shoulders or the edges of whose bournouses were kissed by their followers, laid their palms upon the heads bent down before them in token of their greeting and blessing; friends also kissed each other on the cheeks, as is the custom in Poland.

Near the caravanserai we turned into a small street where coffee is roasted and ground, horses are shod, ropes are made and bags for the transport of merchandise on camels are strongly stitched, where, in a word, everything that is needed by the owners or drivers of caravans is prepared or offered for sale.

Farther along in Kaldoun Street one finds many small dentist's offices, where the local specialists use all sorts of medicaments and magic means—which are, however, under the strict control of the French authorities—as well as talismans and incantations, though at present they more often effect a cure by the ordinary chirurgical means of extraction. These Arab dentists use quite different instruments from those of the European practitioners of today, including small levers such as were in use during my childhood by the assistants of Russian country doctors, and forceps of their own invention; and some of the Arab doctors, who have no special equipment for dental work, perform feats little short of miracles in pulling out teeth with their own forcep-like fingers.

Though this Kaldoun Street is so named because it is the abode of the “extractors of teeth,” one finds here also



the Moorish baths, an institution that plays a large part in the hygiene of the Moslem countries. Here the Faithful wash, rarely but well. Their baths over, they sleep and rest after their hard work upon the land or their journeys of long months from the distant oases of the Sahara to this holy town of Abu Median and of the blessed Lalla Setti. Here in the baths the Berber bone-setters, banned by the French medical profession and police, often practice secretly on cases of toothache, dislocations, skin abrasions and snake or spider bites.

Massage of an extraordinary nature is also given. When I looked into one of the bath-rooms, I saw a stout native lying on the tiled floor, surrounded by clouds of rising steam and with a tall, thin masseur dancing on his back to the accompaniment of his own groans and sighs. The attendant ran up and down and jumped upon the back and legs of his prostrate patient, occasionally stooped to pour over him another pail of boiling water and then began to tread the man's shoulders with his knees and to pummel his neck with his fists. Then he ordered him to roll over and recommenced these same dancing and boxing performances in direct frontal attack with ever-enhanced sounds of battle. With my knowledge of the East this struggle was not a new sight for me, as I had seen the same in Persia, in the Caucasus and in Constantinople and had even tried it, offering my own back as a stage for this original form of ballet. In these Moorish baths I noticed some blind masseurs, types which I have also seen in the bath-houses of Japan, where one often finds sightless attendants.

Then we passed through some *suks*, or commercial

streets, where the merchants offered for sale everything that is produced in the Tlemsen district—grain, fruit, vegetables, bournouses, fezes, turbans, slippers, saddles, charcoal, pots and pans. Near by, in improvised factories, yarn was being prepared and dyed red, green and yellow; furniture, pitchers, basins, straps and ropes were being made; elsewhere hides were being treated and logs cut up into planks and boards.

In the bazaar the crowd of Arabs, Berbers and Negroes that had come in from the country were pushing one another about to get in and bargain for the French wares being sold by the Jews in their small shops, where bright heaps of ribbons, artificial pearls, gilded copper necklaces, bracelets, ear-rings, looking-glasses, combs, thread, pins and a hundred other small articles lured the natives on. The women were especially attracted to these collections and often cautiously unveiled a second eye in sacrifice to these shopping opportunities.

Everywhere there were heaps of vegetables and fruit—grapes of many shades, pomegranates, golden pears, red apples, olives, splendid-looking plums and apricots, melons as transparent as amber, malachite-colored water-melons and immense cucumbers like twisted green snakes—and all of them struck the eye with their conglomerate mass of colors gleaming in the sun.

Some hundred paces beyond was the donkey-market, where these patient, sad, long-eared, faithful, wise and indispensable servants of the African native were being probed, studied and tried in every possible manner. Along the sides the rubbish merchants spread their wares upon stray mats on the ground. Was there anything that

could not be found here? There were bits of iron which it was hard to imagine any one could possibly need, broken pots, copper basins with holes in them, lanterns, bent and dented, a sewing machine in its late decline, a broken kerosene lamp, half of a knife, rifle triggers, dirty rags from bournouses, a whole pile of greasy, once-red fezes and discarded soldiers' blankets, shoes and coats. But somehow one can also find here a handful of arrowheads shaped by the primitive dwellers in the land, a bit of stone with the remnant of a Roman inscription, an ancient statue, a really fine old sword of the Andalusian Moors or a cameo from Carthage or Blida.

As we were again passing through the Jewish quarter, our guide presented us to a grave, old Hebrew merchant in a brown bournous and a black skull-cap. When I asked him about the life of the Jewish colony in Tlemsen, he declared to us that only an ardent faith and the determination to maintain it in its full vigor had enabled the Jews to endure and live through the persecutions and difficulties of the centuries in Africa, but that the Mosaic laws had undergone gradual changes. Today an African Jew, like his Moslem neighbor, believes in djinns, has his saintly Marabouts and indulges in magic practices and rituals in connection with his fetish-worship. The *kubba* of the Jewish Marabout, Rabb Ankwa, is the object of many pilgrimages of African Jews to Tlemsen. Near the *kubba* is a miraculous spring, from which the pilgrims, after having kissed the holy stone on the sacred tomb, drink the healing water with a pinch of soil thrown into it.

When I put to my new acquaintance the further ques-

tion as to why, instead of the traditional fez of the country, he wore a black velvet skull-cap, the same as the Jews wear in Poland, he smiled and gave me the interesting response that this fashion has probably existed since the sixteenth century and had a quite adventitious origin.

"It was in this wise," he continued. "An Algerian pirate captured a boat that was loaded with these little caps, which we call 'berretta,' and his masters, not knowing how to profit by such spoil, secured an order through the Moslem authorities that all Jews were to wear berrettas. From that day to this the custom has persisted so that this cap has become known as the distinctive mark of a Jew. It is possible that this custom was carried into Europe from here, as it spread from Algeria in both directions into Tunisia and Morocco."

The Jewish women very often wear, as their favorite decoration, necklaces of silver and gold coins counting pieces from all countries with a predominance of the louis d'or of Napoleon III, though one can also find among them many Spanish and Russian coins.

After luncheon we took leave of pretty Tlemsen with a little tinge of sadness and entrained for Ujda. We were sorry to say good-bye to Mahomet ben M'Hammed, with whom we had become very friendly and whom we had found to be a most intelligent and agreeable guide.

As the train swung round a curve, the minarets of Tlemsen, the picturesque settlement of El-Eubbad and the ravine of the Safsaf appeared for the last time as our final, fleeting picture of the town of holy *Walis* and of vicious djinns, only to be blotted out a moment later by a curve in the road.

## CHAPTER VII

### OVER THE MOROCCAN FRONTIER

AT one of the railway stations enroute we had the good fortune to find a native orchestra made up of a goodly number of *aliyins*, or musicians. It greatly interested my wife, as, with her long training and deep fondness for the violin, she was studying and collecting all the original native themes which we could discover throughout the journey. The leader of this orchestra, which was at the same time a chorus that sang to its own accompaniment, himself played upon a violin with two strings, called a "rbab" in the Arab tongue. Among the other instruments were the *kwitsra*, closely resembling a mandolin; the *terrar* and the *bendir*, drums with bells attached; the *tbel*, similar to the Russian accordion; the *raita*, or horns; the *derbuka* and the *gwellal*, trumpets, and the *gwesba*, or long flutes.

Zofiette particularly admired her fellow-artist of the violin, though his instrument had only the two strings, tuned very low, and was placed on his knee, just as though it were a small violoncello. She was very anxious to play something of Wieniawski's or Sarasate's on this African Stradivarius, but the guard was signaling for the start, so that we could only listen, just before and as the

train pulled out, to a monotonous, rhythmic song rendered by the voices and instruments of this local orchestra, which we later learned took a prominent part in religious and other ceremonies.

Once away from Tlemsen, the line climbs ever higher and higher until it reaches a plateau bordered by green-sloped mountains and so well watered that the pasture is not only plentiful but almost as rich as that of Switzerland, a fact which attracts to it many nomads with their herds of sheep and cattle. Close to the railway and farther out across the plain were scattered *gituns*, or big white tents made of a woolen material and striped in black or brown, around which women in their dark-blue *abai-yias*, with silver ornaments in their ears and about their necks, and troops of naked children constantly moved. Farther off the herds were grazing under the watchful eyes of the shepherds, clad in their white bournouses and armed with their strong pastoral staffs to guard their flocks against the all-too-possible attacks of the jackals or the occasional hyenas that lie in wait among the rocks of the mountain ravines.

The train passed through tunnels, cut through ridges topped with rock and then rumbled for some distance along a French-built aqueduct that furnished water to some agricultural colonies which the green of their olives and fig-trees and of their smaller shrubbery, covered with the pink blossoms of the laurel, began to bring into our view against a background of the already-yellowing grass. It was here also quite patent that the nomads were profiting by the example of the white immigrants and were beginning to till the soil, evidenced by the fact that

we occasionally saw small Arab farms with their vineyards, olives and pomegranates surrounding their adobe barns and houses. These plantations have an interesting defence against the free-ranging cattle in the hedges of the twining and twisted bushes of a thorny plant that is carefully searched for and gathered by the natives for use in their sheltering enclosures around their tents, fields and lambs. A jackal or wild dog cannot penetrate or jump over these hedges, once they are well grown, and even a man can work his way through this veritable barbed wire with only the greatest difficulty and an even greater noise.

Soon the train began to descend through a broken, hilly country, bringing us down from the altitudes around Tlemsen, which is slightly over two thousand five hundred feet above the sea, to the little town of Lalla Marnia with its mosques, chapels and *kubbas*, at less than twelve hundred feet. The town is situated in a large plain cut by irrigation canals that bring to it water from distant mountain springs. Near it lies Nedroma, where the sultans of the magnificent dynasty of the Almohades had their abode. West of Lalla Marnia the train again began to scramble up the heights, until it reached the plateau of Angad, just over two thousand feet in elevation.

Then we passed the last station in western Algeria, Zouj el-Beghal, and soon crossed the frontier into Morocco to draw up at the border station of Ujda. As the conductor had informed us that we should have to undergo a strict examination by the customs officials, we were soon following the black porters who had our luggage and my arms on their shoulders to the examination

room, where the inspectors seemed to gloat over their possible victim, who was attempting to bring arms into Morocco without the necessary special permit. I had not secured the required document, because I had not been told in Paris of the necessity for doing so. During the preliminary discussion one of the inspectors, noticing my name on one of our pieces, announced immediately and with a great show of gravity:

"A-ha! We have orders to direct you to the police."

"Why so?" I asked in astonishment.

"We have received instructions to this effect from the local consul," he answered. "Please follow me."

Accompanying him to the police officials, an older and a younger one, I exhibited our passports and explained to them why I had no special permit for the arms. The older man set his seal on our documents, smiled, turned to his younger associate and directed him:

"Please take care of the lady and gentleman." Then to us: "Good-bye."

Take care of us! These words recalled vividly to my mind an event in my earlier life, when, during my student days in St. Petersburg, some companions and I were rounded up after a meeting and taken to Police Headquarters, from where we were passed on to the office of an official of the gendarmes and were told that these would "take care" of us. This process of "taking care" of us lasted two months and necessitated our residence in prison during that time.

Having nothing on my conscience against France, I felt confident of a better outcome in this application of the phrase and had only to wait a moment to see our luggage



with my beautiful London cases for the rifles, carbines and ammunition taken without examination and placed in the car that was waiting to drive us to the hotel. Only then did we learn that the authorities in Ujda had received a telegram concerning our journey and, as a result of this, were so considerate and courteous to us. Once at the hotel, I thanked the younger police official for his kindly help and tried to explain that I should give him no further trouble; but this seemed to have no effect on his evident intention of remaining near me. Even when I was about to enter my room, he asked:

"Will you not go at once with me to the consul?"

"I should prefer to change before paying an official call."

"Oh, that is not necessary. It would be better to go at once, as the office will soon be closed."

Yielding, I went along, learning on the way that the newly appointed consul had not yet arrived and that his place was being temporarily filled by the head of the Figig district, Colonel Jean Pariel.

The Colonel received me at once and was both very courteous and interested, as he was acquainted with my books. To my great astonishment, the police official entered the room with me, and I noted that the consul seemed astonished also. During our long conversation, while we studied maps and books bearing upon my prospective journey, my police escort remained close by.

"You may go," the consul finally announced to him. But the official stood his ground, only looking with a knowing and suggestive glance at the consul, who was finally forced to ask bluntly for the cause of his per-

sistence. As Colonel Pariel approached him, he drew out a paper, from which the former read something and broke out into a hearty, good-natured laugh. Stroking his neat, gray beard, he said to the man:

"Very well, sir, you did everything you could. Thank you. You may go now."

The young official went away with an expression of doubt on his face, while the Colonel, still laughing over the incident, explained to me that he had directed the police to meet us and to facilitate my visit to the consulate. The authorities, taking no chances, understood this to mean that they were not to leave me for a moment, as they did not know why the consulate was so much interested in my arrival. Was the young official perhaps convoying a foreign criminal? In any case he had decided to take no chances and to be my guardian angel.

An hour later Colonel Pariel called upon us and took us for a stroll through the town, which is made up of a Medina, or old Arab quarter, enclosed in a square wall with several gates, and the more modern section, containing the administrative offices, the post, the telegraph, shops, military institutions, schools, the church, villas and very pretty gardens. The houses are for the most part small, low brick structures in a pseudo-Moorish style. As the wind was rather strong, the heat was not too trying, yet clouds of dust filled our eyes and made our throats dry and sore.

With little to be seen in French Ujda, Colonel Pariel proposed that we go in his car to the near-by oasis. We left the town, passed through a part of the Medina and

finally came out upon a good motor road, which ran between the low adobe walls that enclosed the houses, gardens and small farms of native proprietors and soon brought us out on the Angad plain, which has the character partially of a prairie and partially of a stony waste. Industrious French and Spanish colonists have, however, subdued it in places to rich plantations of grain of several varieties, tobacco and vineyards and are planning to put in cotton and flax with the confidence that these new crops will give excellent results. The range of Beni Snassen is visible on the horizon, while behind it lies the rich plain of Triffa, patterned by groves of almond-, olive-, and juniper-trees (*Juniperus communis*) and by forests of oak.

Ahead of us in the distance a long, dark line of vegetation gradually raised itself. As we drew nearer we made out the feathery foliage of palms and, after but a few minutes more, were already within the Sidi Yahia oasis. Olive-trees, terebinths (*Pistacia Terebinthus*), weeping willows, date-palms, oaks and yoke-elms grow along the banks of the flowing streams whose waters are drawn off into canals and carried down to supply Ujda and the neighboring plantations. The vegetation is rank and exuberant, in places forming thickets almost impossible to penetrate. Behind a white wall and among some tall trees rose the domes of the *kubbas* of the patron saints of Ujda—Sidi Yahia, Ben Yunes, Bu Cheikh and Sidi Thaleb. The *wali* Sidi Yahia is respected by Moslems and Jews alike, both of whom believe him to have been John the Baptist, who announced the coming of the Messiah. There has long been dissension among the

learned Moslem theologists as to the burial-place of the saint, some maintaining that the interment took place where the *kubba* now stands, while others point to an old tree, covered with sacrificial streamers and bits of cloth, as the real resting place. The second of the Marabouts was buried under another tree, the shadow of which at noontime is held to be the best cure for hip disease. The water from a well near by, dug by Sidi Yahia himself, is also credited with healing powers.

On the grass near the wall about the *kubbas* crowds of pious people were sitting and listening to the teachings of some Marabouts; but not even these faithful ones were allowed within the walls of the sacred enclosure.

After a walk across the oasis we re-entered the car and returned to town, where we drew up by the park that begins near the Medina wall. Colonel Pariel invited us to a Moorish café, where we were served excellent coffee; but, remembering my previous experience, I restricted myself to a single cup. The Colonel, who is very genial, learned and a lover of the Morocco where he has spent the last thirty years of his life, sketched for us the story of Ujda.

The town was founded in the tenth century and became later the capital of the Zenata dynasty. Other Moroccan dynasties alternately captured and held the place down to the thirteenth century, when the Almohade sultans sought to render it impregnable by encircling it with strong walls, which were, however, destroyed before that century had closed. But they were soon restored again and persisted this time, being the very ones

near which we sat drinking fragrant Brazilian coffee prepared by Moroccan hands.

After our coffee we strolled into the Medina through the gate of Bab Sidi Aïssa, beyond which we came upon an entrancing and brilliant scene. Seeing a large crowd of Arabs surrounding a native preacher, we drew nearer and watched with intense interest. In the middle of the circle of listeners a young native of perhaps some thirty years, dressed in a long white garment girt with a cord and holding a pilgrim's staff, revealed a beautiful, inspired face, fiery eyes, a passionate mouth, a long black beard and flowing hair that raised before the mind a picture of John the Baptist, denouncing the sins and evil practices of humanity and preparing the way for the Messiah, or even of Christ Himself, when, angered by the desecrating merchants, he drove them from the temple.

The Arab called upon the names of the saints and swept the circle of his hearers with a passionate voice, one moment with hysterical shouts, the next in mystical whispers, then floating off into an inspired, rhythmical baritone, magnetizing the listeners with his eyes. His audience stood round him with their hands folded as in prayer. As we watched, the emaciated, ascetic figure of the pilgrim began running about from one listener to the other, improvising a prayer, a litany to all the saints of Islam, though most frequently he repeated the names of the local *Walis*, Sidi Yahia, Bu Cheikh, Sidi Thaleb, Sidi Okba, Sidi Zian and others. Each time that the Arab pronounced the name of a saint and a concomitant phrase of supplication or worship, his two assistants, an old man with a face disfigured with leprosy and a young boy with

the expression of an idiot, repeated their master's final words and energetically beat upon their drums. Following this the exhorter called upon all his hearers to make a strict examination of their consciences, reminding them of the dire punishment of sin and the rewards of Paradise, this haven of eternal happiness. It was a prayer, a prophecy, a teaching, a menace and a dissemination of hope for the salvation of the soul, all crowded into one appeal.

Gradually the movements of the speaker grew quicker, more hypnotic and fanatical. Then suddenly he became still and silent, looking intently at his audience and finally fastening his eyes upon a single individual, seemingly peering down into his soul. Such must have been the gaze of the apostle John upon the woman who, according to the legend, boasted that she would entrance the Nazarene with her beauty and her passionate caresses but who, instead, fell to the earth and began to weep in despair while the crowd whispered in terror that the woman made a vain and sacrilegious boast and that it was not He, but John, His Beloved Disciple.

After another moment the inspired improvisations commenced anew, and then one could understand the way in which these mad Mahdis, now chiefs, now fanatical priests and prophets, hypnotized and led away after them whole tribes to the great and bloody work of Holy War. The whole mysticism of Islam, stern and powerful, lay bare before us. In this scene I realized the great difference between the Moslem mysticism and that of the Buddhists of Asia—here in Africa fire and an unaccountable transport of ecstasy, there is a conventional

ritual and unemotional thought, bound by superstition. Once only in Asia did I see a real, though tragic, mysticism, full of deep poetry—the solitary prayer of the blind Living Buddha before the bronze likeness of Buddha Gautama. But it was an exception.

As I watched this wandering prophet and priest, speaking so fervently and with such passion right under the walls of Ujda, where words like his could easily light the fires of insurrection, I turned with an expression of inquietude toward Colonel Pariel, who only smiled calmly and explained that it was but a prayer and a summons to return to the holy life.

Suddenly the Arab broke the flow of his impassioned plea and, tearing and disarranging his hair, shouted in a wild and thundering voice:

*“Zkara! Zkara! Zkara!”*

The praying, concentrated group immediately threw off its religious mantle, raised its head and began looking round, evidently searching for some one. We saw three men hurrying toward the gate. Some young natives, who had been standing near us, started after them; but the Colonel said something in his calm and even-toned voice that stopped them. Only then the speaker became aware of the presence of the consul, made the sign of the salaam in his direction and at once recommended his improvisation. Everything was silent again, and the murmur of the crowd subsided. In a moment the prophet sent his aides among the hearers to collect their alms and gifts in small baskets.

After we turned away from the preaching pilgrim and traversed the market and the *suk*, I watched the Arab and

Jewish merchants greeting the Colonel with friendly smiles, as I stopped to observe in many places the great number of Russian samovars exposed in the various shops and booths. They were the real products of the factories in Tula and bore Russian trade-marks. In answer to my query as to how they had ever filtered through into this Moroccan town, Colonel Pariel explained that many Berbers had recently returned to Ujda from pilgrimages to Mecca, where they had met their co-religionists from Russia and found that they had come with samovars to exchange for North African products—carpets, saddles and the well-known Moroccan embroideries.

As we wandered along, I also asked Colonel Pariel what could be the meaning of the word "Zkara," which had made such a marked impression on the crowd.

"It is the name of a tribe not far away from Ujda whom orthodox Moslems hate and avoid."

Some months later I learned further particulars about this unorthodox clan. The Zkara, like the tribes of Mlaina and Ghouta, are known for their indifference to Islam and to the laws of the Koran. They recognize only the prophet Sidi Ahmed ben Yusuf of Miliana and his disciple, Omar ben Sliman, who was previously mentioned as a renegade Jew. They have their Marabouts from the family of Ben Yusuf, and the so-called "*rusma*" is the oldest hereditary priest. The Marabouts of this tribe despise the Moslems, eat the pork that is so severely banned by the Koran, have their own ritual and take their wives exclusively from the women of Marabout families. On the other side Moslems accuse Zkaras of atheism, demoralization of Islam and debauchery.



Among the Zkaras, as a matter of fact, there is a ceremony during the feast of Bairam called "*Leilat el-Gholta*," or "The Night of Error," during which, after prayers and the performance of certain ritualistic ceremonies in the temple, men and women spend a night of debauchery. It is a custom, or rather an ancient rite, similar to those of the "jumping sect" which existed in certain congregations of the Greek Church of Russia. The origin of these and similar practices may be traced back to the old pagan agricultural cults.

That evening we spent in the hospitable home of Colonel and Madame Pariel and met there a monk of the order of The White Fathers, who had come up not long before out of the Sahara, where he was passing his life among the Tuaregs and other half-wild nomads of the desert. The black cross hanging against the white cassock combined with the serious, calm face of this man to tell of some force which the white race is opposing to the irreconcilability of Islam and to the magic cults of lesser importance which still find shelter within the confines of the Dark Continent.

Before we left that evening Colonel and Madame Pariel invited us to pay them a visit in Figig, their pretty oasis on the edge of the Sahara.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ACROSS WATERLESS RIVERS

AT four the next morning we were already off in an excellent limousine from Ujda through Tasa to the sultan's capital, the Mecca of African Islam—to Fez, a city of mystery, political intrigue, living saints, erudite theologians and Moorish science developed to its highest point. We started in the full darkness that reigns when dawn is still far away. The immense car, slashing the velvet of the night with its great shears of light, twisted and turned through the labyrinths of Ujda streets, scattering with its horn the strings of donkeys and camels on their way to the early morning market.

Once out on the open road, the chauffeur put on speed and carried us like some phantom racers with the dawn past the houses and buildings of sleeping colonists until we left these all behind and found ourselves coursing a stony desert. At daybreak we could see ahead of us a barren, dead plain, cut by a strategic narrow-gauge railway, stretching away to the horizon. Along the highway are located at intervals stations with supplies of gasoline, oil and water, while garages equipped for repairs are to be found in the larger villages. Auto-transportation companies, maintaining a mixed service of light passenger

cars and the heavier, immense autobuses, have elaborated and organized an ideal system for speed and safety in this unsettled region.

As we sped on we crossed numerous stone bridges, thrown over *wads*, or small streams. These are dried river-beds, sometimes shallow, sometimes deep, filled with round, white stones over which the water, greedily drunk by the merciless sun, had ceased to flow. However, some moisture had surely remained in porous layers of rock and soil, for at certain spots in the river-beds or just on their banks thick growths of flowering laurel and low tamarisk bushes still flourished. Farther out on the plain, like round nosegays, solitary terebinth trees followed the banks of the dried *wads* and patiently awaited the return of the waters that would bring down more of the tumbling cobbles and would search their way into the cooler shades of canyons, some of which dropped to a depth of over a hundred feet.

While crossing this first desert that I came upon in Africa, I made an observation which I subsequently confirmed on many occasions. Always and everywhere the North African trees, shrubs and grasses that grow in bunches are topped with a rounded crown. I hazarded the conclusion that the reason for this might be found in the fact that the winds across these deserts blow strong from all directions. There are probably those who would read into this fact the manifestation of a higher mind, that dictates for the plants such a shape as will afford to men and animals tried by the sun the greatest possible amount of shade. It is an uncontrovertible fact that, in the shadow of these rounded trees and bushes, great num-

bers of birds, small rodents, reptiles and insects spend long hours during the heat of the day, when the sun, like some broken cauldron filled with molten gold, pours out its withering stream.

From time to time we rushed past a native village or a neglected *kasba* which raised itself out of the fields, too broken and decrepit now to show more than the crumbling ruin of erstwhile powerful walls and towers. These *kasbas* were fortified enclosures within which native tribes found shelter for themselves, their herds and all their other possessions, sometimes passing their whole lives largely within these walls. At sunrise the single gate of the enceinte was opened and at sunset it was closed, after which no living being could enter. Should even a friend arrive after this hour, he could only pass the night in the open beside his horse or camel; if it were a stranger, he stood a fair chance of being shot by the inhabitant of the *kasba* who was that night on guard. Today these fortified settlements are empty and their former inhabitants live on separate farms or on the plains, cultivating the soil and guarding their herds, following the example of the Europeans. Many are at present used as night shelters for cattle, while others have gone down before the guns of the French during their struggles against warlike and undisciplined tribes. It is only in the higher regions of the Atlas that the natives continue to live within *kasbas* and to keep their walls and towers in proper repair.

At intervals, as oases through the desert, white military posts are set down with their buildings for the garrison and their watch-tower encircled with a protecting

wall. As we went farther and farther westward over a road as level as a table, the chauffeur carried us along at from forty-five to fifty miles an hour. The white stones set by the military glided by and pointed the traveler on his way to Fez, Rabat and Casablanca, marking as well the side roads and even the paths that were only tracks for mules and led off to Bu Huria and Tinnaburt, or to some village at the foot of the range of Jebel Bu Lajeraj inhabited by industrious agriculturists and expert cattle-breeders of the Beni Bu Zeggu. This is one of the mysterious North African tribes, as they use the Berber language but have their own distinct religious ritual and their special magical practices, claiming also that their original ancestor was a Christian *lalla*, or woman saint.

Here and there in the desert we also passed carefully built and cemented wells, which had been dug by the French. To make a well in the desert is a deed most pleasing to Allah, according to the Koran. Consequently the French officials and groups of the colonists are not slow to win their way to the hearts of the natives by providing these most necessary stations on the desert road.

Near one of them we drew up beside a pair of native riders, who turned out to be two armed Berbers that were watering their horses at the cement trough near the well. The riders stood waiting near their mounts and kept their faces entirely covered with their bournouses, as they always do when traveling, giving one the impression that they are afraid of burning their already brown or quite black faces. But their own reason for doing this is really quite a different one. Passing through unknown and

spiritually unchartered places, they know not the day nor the hour when a djinn may enter their mouths and cause sickness.

The men carried long Arab rifles, with graceful, slender stocks ornamented with silver and mother-of-pearl. When they sprang into their saddles and their horses shot away as though their feet hardly touched the earth, these riders made a picturesque sight with their rifles resting on their hips and their bournouses flying in the wind. But the mechanical speed-king of mountain and plain soon overtook and passed the more picturesque men of the desert on their Arab steeds and then drew alongside a railway train, filled with the white forms of natives and their wives, with *haiks* drawn over the women's heads. Some of the dark passengers had even scrambled up and were squatting on the roofs of the cars.

Taurirt and Gwersif were two of the largest villages we passed on the way. The first of these is on the left bank of the Sa River and counts a mixed European, Arab and Jewish population. In the story of Morocco this locality, which is crossed by important commercial highways, has figured prominently, for it was here that many struggles took place between the various competing dynasties.

The Taurirt plain, as it stretches southward, merges into the plain of Tafrata, within which is located the city of Debdu, previously the capital of an independent state and today a Jewish town of peculiar interest on account of its folk-lore and the relations that exist between the Jews and the Arabs. These Jews of Debdu very carefully guard their ancient faith but observe even

more strictly the old Berber superstitions and the practices of the cabala, or mystic theosophy of the Hebrews. Side by side with wise rabbis one can find here *majouses*, that is, magi, and *kahinas*, or fortune-tellers. Whereas it is a well-known fact that Jews living in the Mellah in Moslem towns are despised as unclean and are periodically persecuted because of the fiery hate of the Faithful of Islam, in Debdu the situation is just reversed, for here the Jews hold the upper hand and the Moslems work for them as servants. Seeking some explanation of this, I was informed that the proximity of a tribe that is rather indifferent to the law of the Prophet and regards Ben Sliman as the greatest of the saints may account for it. I feel, however, that this may not be sufficient reason for the unusual relationship between Moslems and Jews and that the real explanation may be found in the fact that the local Jews have been agriculturists for a very long time and have taught the better practice of the science to the natives of Floushe, Hassian el-Jhudi and other localities, assuring them through this a basis of existence at a time when war disrupted the regular commercial life and cut off contact with ordinary sources of supply.

At the point where the Mellulu flows into the largest of Moroccan rivers, the Muluya, there was located in the time of the Ptolemies the ancient city of Galafa. Now in its place one finds only a colonization center with a military post and a small native village, which, taken together, form the little town of Gwersif. This present native settlement was built at the time of Al-Bekri and still has about it the oldest walls extant from this period.

Belonging to the warlike tribe of Uled Mesaoud, which roamed the prairies of Beni Bu Yahi, the place was wiped out during the course of inter-tribal wars. It was here that the army of the Almohades was cut to pieces during its retreat from the east.

Beyond Gwersif the road continues on through the stony desert, until suddenly it approaches the single spot in this whole region which resembles a prairie. There, through the presence of some water-supply available over a few acres, yellow grasses and low, bushy palms were sufficient to give life to the plain, though they seemed insignificant enough as verdure. Prairie-larks and other small birds flew about from shrub to shrub, hunting locusts and insects; small field-mice with coats that exactly matched the prairie background showed themselves here and there; while bustards ran out almost from under the wheels of the swiftly moving car. During subsequent hunting expeditions in more southern latitudes I had occasion to shoot some of these African bustards. Generally they were the *Otis houbara* or *Otis Arabs* and were distinctly smaller than the *Otis tarda*, familiar in Europe and Asia but much rarer in North Africa.

From a pile of stones near which we stopped there scuttled down a big lizard, whose brothers I subsequently met in several places. The Arabs call it a "*dabb*." It belongs to the Agama family and is zoologically designated as *Uromastix spinipes*. In the southern parts of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia the natives catch these lizards, fatten them and serve them as very *récherché* dishes. Sometimes they grow to a length of nearly twenty inches. The gall, brain and tongue are used in magic practices,



an honor which the poor *dabb* owes to the fact that the number of rings in its tail counts the magic twenty-one.

This well-inhabited bit of desert soon lay far behind us, and we were once more surrounded by the great spiritless waste, monotonous and dead. The hopeless landscape it made was only occasionally enlivened by a file of laden camels appearing on the horizon or by the square walls of a military blockhouse with a solitary sentinel looking out from the tower.

Finally, after some further hours on the plain, we nosed our way into the gullies and ravines of the Ghiata range, where we again discovered water in the river-beds—water in the form of almost invisible rivulets hiding away between and underneath the rocks and stones, just as if it were trying to avoid its enemy, the sun.

We made our next stop at the custom-house for Tasa, a large town which lay hidden behind the mountains. While our chauffeur was changing a tire, we took advantage of the opportunity to go for a stroll and were no more than started, before we were held up by the curious sight of lizards running straight up and all about the walls of the custom-house. They were from six to eight inches long, had grayish-brown skins and carried long finger-like toes, fitted with disproportionately large adhesive pads. They were the so-called "wall-gecko," or *Tarentola Mauretanica*, and were looked upon by the natives as a most useful ally, in that they hunted flies, midges, spiders and other insects. On the other hand, when the colonists in the northern part of the Oran district introduced apiculture, these same geckos became very obnoxious, inasmuch as they killed the bees. It is a

strange feature of these wall-lizards that they have incredibly fragile tails, as evidenced by the fact that you have only to catch one by his tail or, sometimes, even simply to frighten him into falling from the wall to see his tail break almost as though it were a piece of glass. It makes amends for this peculiar quality by growing again very rapidly. The gecko possesses another distinctive trait in being the only lizard with a voice, which he tries out during his evening hunt by distinct and rather loud cries.

After the geckos we visited Tasa superficially. It is but one of the interesting posts along this road that man has for centuries followed from Algeria to the Atlantic in his struggle for existence and which all sorts of invaders have also taken. In the grottoes of Kifan el-Ghomari and in ancient tombs near the town the natives have found weapons and other objects from the stone age and from the earliest periods of the iron age, while Roman ruins also remain along the Tasa River and in some parts of the city. The place already existed in the seventh century and was early known for its gold-mines. With the varied and destructive repercussions of the many wars adown the centuries certainly no historian will be able to follow all the flags that have waved above this place.

At present there is located here one of the largest military establishments in French Africa, as war with the insurgents of the north who seek to wrest the throne of Idris I, one of the great rulers of Maghreb, from its present incumbent, faithful to France, and with the independent wild mountaineers, Ghiata and Beni Warrene, who

do not yet recognize the authority of the sultan, still continues in various parts of the district.

We had only time to visit cursorily the ancient mosque, the colorful *suks*, some humming caravanserais, the bashaws' palaces and a few of the most important buildings of the town, before our chauffeur was honking for us to return. I should have disregarded the importunity of our driver to have remained long among the hundreds of tombs of the old necropolis, were it not that I knew these burial-places had long ago been despoiled of all their treasures and interest by that extraordinary caste of treasure seekers, who work throughout these districts with the aid of Marabouts their own magic incantations and their special talismans, all of which guide them in divining the location of their spoils.

After we had passed through and beyond the oak-forested hills of Ghiata, the road began to climb in sharp curves up the slopes of a mountain-range from whose summit we espied in the distance an immense dark-green, almost-black, oasis, the winding blue line of a river and the slender minarets above the shining white spot of a town—Fez, the dominator of the minds and hearts of Maghreb.

## CHAPTER IX

### AN OPAL IN AN EMERALD SETTING

“**W**HEN the great Sultan Mulay Idris II el-Azhar ordered his vanguard to halt on the summit of the Zalagh range, they saw there before them a deep valley, filled with a lush and beautiful vegetation and watered by two life-giving rivers.” Thus a Moorish bard, surrounded by a crowd of the Faithful returning from the cemetery of Bab Futuh, began his tale, which my guide, a young Arab of Fez, translated for me, as we stood in the circle before him and listened to his recital of earlier days.

“‘I do not know,’ spake the sultan, ‘what has drawn me to this place about which I have never heard but which I have distinctly seen with the eyes of my soul. Now, as this valley spreads itself before me, I seem to feel that there has fallen here from the finger of my great father the ring with the milky, iridescent opal set about with dark-green emeralds, which a mysterious Hendi (Hindoo) gave him with a powerful incantation. The place is beautiful and worthy of a descendant of the holy Ali, who had as his wife the daughter of our great Prophet, through whom the blood of the holy one came to the veins of the Idrises.’”

"As he spoke, the face of the sultan shone with inspiration, and his eyes were full of joy and enthusiasm. The chiefs surrounding the *sherif* were astonished; astonished also were the knights, Irams, *ulema* and the revered *Walis*, inasmuch as nothing was to be seen on the river-cut plain save the green of the vegetation and the blue of the streams. Understanding the astonishment of all, the sultan exclaimed:

"'You are as blind as moles, and your souls are as slaves enchained, for I say unto you that I see before me an immense city with thousands and thousands of homes, splendid palaces, rich mosques, striving skyward with their minarets; crowds of people, among them angels, messengers of Allah! O great Allah, *Khalek* (Creator), *Khaled* (Pre-eternal), make it to be so, that this city become the home of science, wisdom and faith; ordain that here Thy laws be honored and that the inhabitants remain faithful to the Koran and faithful in prayer as long as this city shall exist, this city which I now begin to build.'

"Saying this, Idris began to draw in the sand before him a plan of the walls and of the principal buildings of the town. As he drew, the master was approached by an unknown man in rags, girt about with a rope. The stranger had long, matted hair and beard, carried a curved pilgrim's staff in his hand and bore beneath his arm a human skull and a cross, the symbol of Aïssa.

"'I am a Nasrani and live the life of an eremite. I have dwelt here in these mountains for many years. I have had a vision that a great army would come here under the command of a powerful leader, and the One

God bade me say that there below, where the two rivers meet and flow away through the thicket of shrubs and trees, there existed eighteen centuries ago the great, rich city of an unknown people, which has left naught but its tombs. This city was called Sef and is to be rebuilt by a man bearing the name of Idris and sprung from the family of the Eastern Prophet.

“‘Glory to the name of Allah!’ cried the enraptured sultan. ‘I am from the family of Mahomet, the Prophet, and my name is Idris. I have come here to build a city where all of the ninety-nine names of the Lord Creator shall be repeated and the law of his Prophet shall run through all the land.’”

This coming of the second ruler of the house of Idris took place on February third, 808 A.D., when the quarters of Adua el-Andaluse and Adua el-Kairween were begun and soon encircled with walls to defend them against the attacks of the terrible Negro, Khabal, who then ravaged the country. The courageous Sais, one of the generals of Idris, fought and vanquished the Negro and brought under the sultan’s domination all the tribes located in the valleys of the Fez and Sbu rivers.

Then Sultan Mulay Idris gave orders that the beautiful gate, Bab Ifrikiya, or the African Gate, should be open from sunrise to sunset to all travelers—both to the Faithful and to foreigners. The author of the work entitled *Rawd el-Kirtas*, written in Fez in 1326 when this town was really the center of Moslem wisdom and science, the focal point of all Maghreb and even appealing to the imagination of peoples in foreign lands, records this legend of the creation of Fez and of the events

which then took place quite in the same manner as do the bards of the people who today chant their folk-tales in the market-places. The Arab historians also state that Fez was founded in the ninth century. What was here before this epoch? Did the mythical Sef really exist? What nation was it that left rows and rows of tombs that can be seen today outside the walls erected by the Idrisides and added to by the Almoravides, these emigrants from the Sahara who sprang from the Berber tribe of the Almohades, who were in turn those mountaineers from the higher Atlas regions that afterwards ruled in Seville? It is only natural to surmise that here in this valley at the junction of these two rivers that brought to the fertile earth a lovely carpet of green, rich verdure, where a defence against invaders was easily established, there should have been from earliest centuries a dwelling-place for man.

Some indication of all this we had in the strange and abiding impressions which came to us, as we approached and drew up under the walls of this ancient capital, where our car seemed to be held up by the djinns or other spirits of the place as a wanton, unthinkable intruder. In any case, it was either these tutelary spirits or the effects of the reckless speed at which the chauffeur hurried us on over stony roads or even the open desert that brought the monster to a halt and forced us to make our more humble entry into the city of Idris II on foot in search of our hotel. Before we had reached the gate we stopped as though transfixed, held by a biblical picture of the Holy Land that arose before us. Near a well sat an Arab with long nair falling over his shoulders and with

a beard that spread itself upon his white bournous. One hand grasped a shepherd's staff, while the other pointed to the sky. His low, penetrating voice and his impressive appearance brought most poignantly to my mind the Sermon on the Mount, and I had the feeling that I could distinctly hear the words:

"Blessèd are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessèd are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

The likeness was all the more striking, in view of the fact that around the speaker sat twelve listening Arabs, with their eyes fixed intently upon the holy man. I counted twice and was not mistaken—they were twelve. The impression was strangely touching and not to be forgotten, deep and simple as one from the days of childhood, when mother showed to us the pictures in the Bible.

"This is a *hadj*," explained a young man, who approached and addressed us in the hope of opening the way to being engaged as a guide. "He is a *reshid*, pious and strong in faith, who has just returned from a difficult pilgrimage to the sacred city of Mecca and who is telling of his journey with the hope of persuading others to undertake it, promising to them the sure help and favor of Allah and the Prophet. Those around him are common *mumeni*, who often vainly dream through their whole lives of this pilgrimage which is so agreeable to Allah but which they are more often than not unable to make."

We entered through the gate, Bab el-Maroukh, and, after a ten-minute walk under the escort of a group of dirty, noisy street-urchins, reached our objective, the



Hôtel Transatlantique, where we took up our abode under the protecting care of Madame Ossun, the energetic and hospitable directress. Being in Maghreb, with its fatalism and superstition, we began at once to live its life and interpreted as a good omen the fact that the name of the presiding genius of our caravanserai was practically identical with the first half of our own. This seemed to be borne out, when we were conducted to a large, airy room, redolent with the aroma of cedar from the doors and ceiling and opening into a little patio, or court, paved with bright majolica tiles and made garden-like by a tinkling fountain and two small banana trees. But we did not remain long in the hotel, as we were anxious to see at once more of the attractive hues of this "opal in an emerald setting." Before starting out we selected from among a number of young natives a guide by the name of Hafid, who was a *thaleb*, or student in a *medersa*, and whose cleverness and excellent knowledge of French revealed to me many features of the native life that might easily not have been spread before the casual traveler.

As we set out with Hafid in spite of the terrific heat for our first tour of the town, the sun poured down cascades of molten gold from the fiery sky, which seemed to flow along and down the walls of the houses and the ruined ramparts of the town until its hot stream reached the earth and there pushed more lazily and slowly into every corner, every crevice of a wall and along and over the thresholds of carved doors. Everywhere this molten gold fought with the darkness of the shadow that hid beneath the branches of a solitary tree, under the protrud-

ing eaves of houses, behind a slender column or at the corners of narrow lanes, extending sometimes long feelers from a deeper shade or tracing the contour of a more daring branch on some plane or fig-tree. The deepest shade reigned only in the mosques, in houses and in the inner recesses of shops, where men barricaded themselves against the searching stream.

Though at this hour no Europeans were visible on the streets, the fiery heat seemed to be no deterrent to the native Berbers and Negroes, among whom there were, however, frequent evidences of their appreciation of it in the numerous water-carriers, who, for the most part Negroes or Berbers with an admixture of Negro blood, went about half-naked, carrying their big gleaming water-skins, from which the precious liquid leaked at every seam. Ringing their bells, they cried to their greedy patrons:

*"Tessaout! Berrad ma! (Are you thirsty? Here is cold water!)"*

It is said that water is best kept cool in these goat-skin bags, better even than in the conventional porous clay jars of hot countries, inasmuch as the moist, hair-covered exterior offers a very large superficial area for the cooling process of evaporation. Besides the cool waters which were centuries ago leashed and made to run through the canals and pipes and brought their freshness to the *dars*, or palaces, of such families as those of the noble tribe of the Beni Merin, who were at one time the protectors of the dynasty of the Merinides, the town is also blessed by the stream of a quick-running river that sings the underlying accompaniment for the lighter airs

of the fountains that grace a thousand courts and squares. Happy city, set there among the naked mountains and stone-strewn deserts, about which the poets of Cordova, Cairo, Mecca and even Bagdad have sung their lays.

But with time this opal of the desert attracted too many inhabitants and with the multitude acquired that pollution of river and canal which brought in its train disease and death. Already in the thirteenth century the Arab doctors realized that the epidemics had their source in contaminated water and ordered that the people should drink only the life-giving fluid taken from distant mountain springs and streams. This necessity has led to the building up of a distinct caste of honest water-carriers, who bring their supplies from great distances, even at times from a renowned spring nearly ten miles away from the city. Besides being honest the seller of water is also somewhat of a sorcerer, for, when he fills his skin, he murmurs a magic formula, makes traditional passes and wets the outer surface of his bag in a prescribed manner, and he possesses likewise a talisman against epidemics and carries a bell to frighten the djinns of illness.

Even though the people are thus protected by the honesty of their water-purveyors, one has not to remain long in this city of two hundred thousand inhabitants to realize that the French engineers have before them a very difficult and delicate task in transforming the canals that have come down from the times of the Almohades and Merinides into a modern sanitary system, for this will require not only the abandonment of many of these sacred canals but also a change in the river-bed and the

destruction of many *sekkaias*, or beloved and popular fountains, most of which are sacred to some legend or story concerning a revered *wali* or powerful emir of earlier days. To find a spring, to dig a well or to make an aqueduct for the service of man carries with it great merit before Allah; but to destroy this, to deprive the population of water, were it only for a minute, is, according to Moslem *reshids*, a crime of which only the *rumi*, or white man, is capable. One has only to phrase this to make it easy to understand what a subtle and difficult task the European faces in what would ordinarily be a simple problem of engineering.

Hafid led the way across the city, until we came to the basket *suk*, where the artisans were making baskets and sacks from laurel twigs and palm-leaves. We had no more than arrived when in through the gate came a *kafila*, or caravan, of twenty camels, carrying great loads of the dried branches of the palm brought to these basket-weavers from the far-away oases in the south. As we stepped aside into the shadow of the door and surrendered the street to the towering animals, I read in their eyes fright, pain and despair in contrast to the placid and supercilious expression of their two-hump Asiatic brothers, who have not the appearance of slaves under the absolute domination of man. In fact the Bactrian camel occasionally turns on and attacks his driver, whereas the Arabs and Berbers never expect a protest from their beasts. What accounts for the difference in the psychology of the two species? Perhaps the African camel was captured and enslaved long before the Asiatic one, which still preserves within its nature the atavistic love

of freedom that is kept alive by its contact with the Gobi desert and the great stretches of northern Tibet and Eastern Turkestan.

When the caravan had passed, Hafid led us outside the city gate, turned and said:

"This is Bab el-Maroukh, about which a whole literature exists among both the Arabs and Berbers, and even the tribes of the distant Sahara and of Senegal have legends concerning it. Last year a traveler, who was here, told me that there are poems about the gate in European books. Is this true?"

When I answered Hafid that the portal had been immortalized by poets in several languages, he spoke with disappointment in his voice:

"Then you know Bab el-Maroukh, and I wanted to tell you all that one says in our city about it."

As I was anxious to hear whatever local legends might exist about this ancient portal, I urged Hafid to tell me all that he knew of it and invited him to a nearby café, where we should be undisturbed and I could write.

"Thank you, sir," he responded with very evident pleasure; "but, before we go, observe well the gate and remember all its details."

The port pierced a powerful square tower, constructed of brick and stone and carrying the "color of centuries," this shade which in time covers all of man's works independent of their location and of the degree of civilization of those who build them, whether it be a pagoda in an Indian jungle, a pyramid on the sands of Egypt or some bastion or drawbridge of an old castle in Europe.

As we turned back through the tunnel-like entrance that pierced the thick wall and entered a café just off the *suk* Tala, Hafid began his tale.

"Old Fez—for we are now in the quarter of Fez el-Bali—has had a long and eventful history. Following the sultans of the Idris family came the Almoravide dynasty, and after them the Almohades, Merinides and others. As the city was ever a stronghold of the Faith, of wisdom, literature and art, it towered in its glory above other cities, occasionally declining somewhat only to rise again to greater heights than before. In one of these periods of recession the Sultan Abd el-Mumen deflected the river from its regular bed and captured and destroyed the city. However, his grandson, Yakub el-Mansur, rebuilt what his grandfather had ruined, though little of even his reconstruction work remains to us to-day save the gate of Bab el-Maroukh.

"And have you heard how this portal of Mansur, which has stood here since 1204, came to have the name of 'the Gate of the Burned'? It arose from the fact that when the sultan was strengthening the walls of Fez el-Bali, the Berber tribes living in the Ghomara mountains rose in rebellion against him under the leadership of Mahdi el-Obeid, a relative of the last of the Almoravides. After a long struggle the Mahdi was vanquished and made prisoner, following which Sultan Yakub el-Mansur ordered a great fire lighted under the arch of the massive gate and in it tortured the captured chief throughout several days until finally his body was consumed. Then the *suk* of the basket-weavers was established here within the gate, as Mansur ordered the ashes of the Mahdi and

his fellow-prisoners, who were burned with him, collected together in baskets and sent to the mountaineers of the Ghomara to apprise them of the fate of those who opposed the sultan's will.

"It was here also that the books and messenger of the false prophet, Ben Sliman, were afterwards burned. Once a year the sultan came to Bab el-Maroukh and judged criminals, who had spent all the months since their capture weighted in irons, looking forward to this annual court of the ruler. When the criminals sentenced to death mounted to the number of one hundred, the ninety-ninth had, according to established custom, the right to ask for the hand of the sultan's daughter. But it was necessary, if he would hope to succeed in his suit, that he should possess some special merit beyond the mere caprice of Chance. He must be either very rich, very strong, fleet of foot, clever at arms or well versed in the songs and stories of a bard. If such a condemned one, on being presented to the ruler's daughter, were accepted, he was saved; but if, in spite of his unusual qualities, he were refused, the sultan pronounced upon him the fatal sentence: 'You are blessed with neither good fortune nor happiness but with only the vermin of a criminal and you shall perish.'

"Through this gate the Andalusian Moors, who formed a large portion of the inhabitants of Fez, brought back their Christian slaves, or *Nasara*, as they were called. Some were dragged this long distance only to be beheaded for the glory of the sultan, while others became *khadem*, or slaves sold at auction. The women among these, once they had been bought by a Moor or an Arab

who threw over them the *ltam*, or shielding veil, became citizens of the town and enjoyed the protection of the laws of the Koran."

"Did the earth here drink many tears of blood, Hafid?" asked Zofiette.

In answer the boy only gave an exclamation and covered his face with his hands, thus telling us more plainly than words that the merciless severity of the ancient sultans was written deep in letters of blood in the memory of the present population of Maghreb, where this separate and stormy empire of the *sherifs* has for centuries dominated these desert folk.

Coming out of the café we once more stood before Bab el-Maroukh, garbed in its ancient mantle of brown, indifferent as a centenarian who is burdened and haunted by memories of the past. This Gate of the Burned attracted us and established such sway over us that we often returned to it during excursions we made through the city without Hafid. We saw it at the hour when the disappearing sun threw upon it from the horizon its last effulgent rays and gave the impression that all the blood shed beneath it had risen through invisible channels and covered it, until it was all clothed in a scarlet of kingly glory, indifferent to the sufferings of man. We stood before Bab el-Maroukh at night, when the massive portal rose in the darkness like a black, powerful apparition, indistinct in form and contour but immense and threatening. At another time, when the moon threw upon it a sheaf of pale rays, the cornices were distinctly traced in outline upon the mass, while in the recesses the shadows moved and pressed together, and murmurs, half sighs and



half groans, were heard. Perhaps these were accounted for by bats, geckos or small owls that were hovering there; but, who knows? Perhaps the souls of the chieftains of those courageous mountain tribes once murdered here were come to curse and threaten the merciless rulers of Maghreb; or perhaps the shades of murdered Christian martyrs, brought by the Moors from the southern shores of Iberia, Italy, the Balearic Islands and Sardinia, had returned to the Bab el-Maroukh of their suffering and despair.

Our Hafid was in love with the old city, or Fez el-Bali, where he was born and raised, and spoke with contempt of the newer town, or Fez el-Jdid. Under his guidance we studied carefully the old quarter. Passing once more out through Bab el-Maroukh we strolled through the great Sherarda, *kasba*, an immense rectangular wall enclosing the barracks and homes of the Sherarda and Udaya tribes, who were drawn upon to form the kernel of the sultan's army. In the old markets, set in contrasting juxtaposition to the very modern French barracks and hospital, we found one element that never ceased to hold our attention—the *meskins*, or beggars, of the town. Practically every African *meskin* is a member of a powerful organization that covers all the Moroccan and Algerian towns and is really a special clan, possessing its own traditions and laws and even its own schools. It boasts some of the wittiest and apparently the most light-hearted individuals in all Maghreb and is really a caste that lays special stress upon the laws of heredity which carry down special privileges in certain families.

Every beggar, man or woman, is in the first place a

skilled ethnologist, psychologist and adept in the *fiqh*, which is the law of the Koran regulating the outward acts of the Faithful, as well as in the *akaid*, which governs the inner belief and its expression in religious practices. These two great divisions combine to form the law of the Koran, or the *shariat*, such as is taught in the *medersas*. Many *meskins*, with their clever learning, could well fill the posts of professors in these institutions, while some of them, plying their profession near the great mosques among the learned and rich, can even speak colloquially *al-lugha*, or the sacred language of the Koran, just as some of our ancestors used Latin. Others in the cult know by rote the litanies sacred to the holy *walis*, revered *ulema*, sages and prophets, and can distinguish also the different tribes that most highly respect each one of them. Such a trained *meskin* with one look identifies the clan of a passer-by and begins at once to beg in the name of its patron saints.

"In the name of Ali ben Mohammed! In the name of Sidi el-hadj Abu Hafs, to you, good sire, noble *mumen*, Ibrahim ben Nail, a poor man dying of hunger and thirst, offers his plea. The saints of your tribe, who have given to it riches and glory, will reward you liberally, if you carry out the will of Allah and grant alms to the beggar."

"In the name of Sidi Kasem," begins the chant of another, who stops suddenly and, turning his "blind" eyes on his neighbor, observes with a low laugh: "By Allah! I never recognized that merchant, who yesterday gave me alms in the name of Omar ben Sliman and of Drilali, for he is a heretic; and today I have gone and spoiled the game! It is a pity, as he is rich and generous." The

blind man sat thinking for a moment; then, jumping up from his mat, he ran along in front of the tall, majestic Berber whose creed he had muddled and opened on the passers-by with:

"Blind moles, ungrateful ones! You remember not the name of the great Omar ben Sliman, the wise and merciful one. I beg for alms in the name of *wali* ben Sliman!" A silver coin shot its gleam through the air and fell in the basket of the blind *meskin*.

I watched these beggars in several cities and towns of Africa, but found Fez to be of paramount interest. I even went out before sunrise to see groups of them coming from their miserable lodgings and being hailed by their chiefs, or *mokkhadems*, as "*ashab, ashab!* (companions, companions!)" and assigned their places for the day in such a manner that none of the caste should suffer an injustice. With all the places taken by the hour of the morning prayer, the Faithful give the daily alms in the form of food or money, for which they receive the thanks and benedictions of the *meskins* in the traditional phrases of:

"A happy day be unto you! . . . Allah help you! . . . Allah, the Protector, will repay you! . . . The protection of Allah be upon you!"

To which the God-fearing Moslems answer:

"Peace be unto you!"

These beggars are also often employed as porters or as messengers, carrying through sometimes most delicate matters in the capacity of spies or agitators. A Jew from the Mellah told me that on April 17th, 1912, when the treaty establishing the protectorate of France over Mo-

rocco was signed, numbers of beggars hurried through the streets of the city, entered certain houses with letters and came out bearing heavy packages, which they bore off to the poorer quarters, to the *suks*, the *fonduks* and the caravanserais. Other *maskins* hurried to the barracks of the sultan's troops, to the mosques, to the *medersas* and to the houses of the Fez notables, who were displeased with the supineness of the sultan before the unbelievers. Here and there they stopped to whisper something to a passer-by, and one caught the words:-

"Holy War . . . Warriors for the Faith!"

Then suddenly a shot was fired that carried the signal throughout all of Fez el-Bali, expectant and excited. Other shots responded like a reverberating echo, and these were followed by a volley in the barracks, where the Berber troops revolted against the sultan and attacked the French. For three days the fight raged in the labyrinth of narrow streets of old Fez, during which white-clad figures stormed the houses of the Europeans and murdered their inmates without mercy.

On the morning of the fourth day the beggars sat in their accustomed places, as though nothing out of the ordinary had occurred, and the *suks* and bazaars were crowded as usual, the only difference being the numerous French soldiers that were posted on guard and the artillery mounted on the surrounding hills. It was but in undertones that the word went round that sixty-eight unbelievers had been sent to their death and that three hundred faithful *mumeni* had gone to Paradise, where in return for their fidelity to the Koran and the Faith, the Prophet Mahomet himself, the protector and defender of Islam, had met and welcomed them.

## CHAPTER X

### THE ISLAMIC FLAME

AGAIN we were in Fez el-Bali, htot under the rays of the summer sun and burning with the ardor of the Faith. Hafid, paying no heed to the temperature, led us through narrow streets beneath the balconies of homes of the rich, hurried us past all the shops in the *suks* and revealed clearly through the fire in his own eyes that he was anxious to show us something which had more than a passing interest for him as well.

As we finally came in sight of a high, square minaret, surmounted by a rounded dome and decked with gilded balls, Hafid whispered with unconcealed enthusiasm:

"This is the minaret of the most important mosque and greatest *medersa* in the city, Kairween. It is our most noted university, possessing the ablest professors in the land and counting the greatest number of students. The other universities have their eminent teachers in certain spheres of learning, but none of them boasts such a faculty as ours, among whom are the highest authorities in every branch of our science. The council of professors is the supreme authority in all religious and scientific disputes, to which even the authorities in Egypt, Turkey and Syria turn for advice. Oh! If only I might join the ranks of the students in Kairween!"

"Perhaps we shall meet one of the professors, as we are visiting the university," I observed.

"Alas, that cannot be, for here the law of *horm*, forbidding men of another faith to enter its holy precincts, is strictly observed."

However, that favor of Chance which always seems to help me in life did not desert me in Fez, as the proprietor of an antique-shop which we later visited presented me to one of these very professors, who was with him at the time. My knowledge of the souls of Eastern men and some little acquaintance with the various questions of religion succeeded in winning the confidence of the Moslem scholar, so that he not only remained and indulged in a long conversation but also helped me to purchase a very old and beautiful copy of the Koran. To buy a sacred Moslem book is not an easy or an entirely secure performance—but this all occurred some days later.

In the meantime, Hafid, guiding us through labyrinthine streets that encircled the place, gave us an opportunity to survey the walls and to look through the various gates and doors affording vistas of the great Moslem temple and seat of learning. But we could only gaze in and listen to the stories of Hafid and of a very intelligent muezzin, with whom I established a useful credit-balance by the gift of a silver franc, which at once converted him into a talkative rival of Hafid for our favor. His account of the place ran thus:

At the time of the Idrises, Fatma ben Mohammed el-Fehri, a rich and God-fearing woman who belonged to a Berber tribe from Kairwan, erected in 859 a small mosque

with a well which exists to the present day. The sister of Fatma, Miriam, built another temple, the mosque El-Andaluse, in the quarter inhabited by Andalusian Moors. Up to the conquest of Maghreb by the Zenata emirs the mosque of Fatma remained in its original state, until in 918 the Zenatas enlarged the building and added greatly to its ornamentation.

Thirty-eight years later the pious Ahmed Abu Beker, the vice-regent and architect of Sultan Abd er-Rahman, Caliph of Andalusia, again made certain important changes in the plan and structure of the mosque, erected the square minaret and placed numerous blue enamel inscriptions in various parts of the edifice. The chroniclers of the Merinides period recorded and thus preserved for future generations the text of the inscriptions of this pious and humble architect, who not only executed this beautiful work, so agreeable unto Allah, but also paid for it with the ransoms which he had received for the Christian slaves and captives that had been brought to the Berber capital. Pointing to the gilded balls above the dome of the minaret, the muezzin then added :

“The holy architect placed on the summit of his minaret the point of the sword of Idris II and on this he fastened a golden apple, set with diamonds, pearls and turquoises, thus gaining for the city the blessing and protection of the spirit of this holy Imam who had founded the town. Then Kairween at the time of Sultan Yusuf ben Abd el-Hakk was again renovated, ornamented with new carvings and enlarged by the addition of extensions such as the chapel where the talismans brought from the Ganges were placed—a golden bird

with a scorpion in its beak, which kept rats from the mosque, and a sphere made from an unknown stone, whose presence killed every snake that came in whatsoever manner within the walls of Kairween. In that age this was a very useful talisman, as there were frequent cases of the killing of political or religious adversaries by means of poisonous serpents."

At this point the jealous Hafid interrupted the tale of the muezzin.

"And when the rulers of the Almoravide dynasty began a formidable enlargement and beautification of Kairween, workmen engaged in excavating for the construction of one of the principal gates uncovered an old vault. Thinking that it contained treasure, they broke into it but found that it held only a stone basin of fresh, cool water in which an immense tortoise was living. As the animal's growth throughout the centuries had carried it beyond the width of the incurving brim, the workers found it impossible to remove the tortoise and so sealed up the vault and left it there, where Allah had provided it, in the flowing stream, with all that was requisite for its life. Though partially destroyed by fire, Kairween was later rebuilt and became the last word in its display of art and wealth. Poets composed beautiful verses on the mosque and the *medersa*, while the Faithful were ever overawed by the richness and splendor of the temple.

"When the Almohades seized the power in Maghreb, the council of Imams and scholars in Fez, uncertain as to what course the victors might follow, spread paper and whitewash over the gilded walls and the ceilings set with enamel and precious stones. But to the great relief



of the city, the Almohades sent here their most skilled architects, Abd Allah ben Daoud and Abu Imran Musa, who flanked the principal court with marble tablets, polished as mirrors, constructed a beautiful basin for ritual ablutions, and added lovely fountains and a beautiful marble window with fine tracery and an inscription glorifying our Lord Mahomet."

The old manuscript *Rawd el-Kirtas* describing just this period in the life of the mosque and the *medersa*, speaks of two hundred seventy pillars forming sixteen aisles with twenty-one arches each, of the space within the mosque for twenty-three thousand of the Faithful, of seventeen doors leading to the interior of the temple and of the pulpit which was made from rare and artistically carved woods and from which prophets, astrologers and wise *ulema* addressed the people and their rulers. In the sixteenth century, when Leo Africanus visited and described it, the temple was no less splendid. He noted that many of the sciences were taught within the *medersa* from the hour of sunrise until after midnight, with only short intervals for prayer, and also that the buildings housed an immense library of twenty thousand volumes, of which only seventeen hundred now remain.

As we wandered round it, we peeped into the forbidden enclosure through the gates, through every possible aperture and even over the wall from the terrace of the Meshabia *medersa*. In this way we beheld the beautiful entrance leading in from the court where the silver stream of the fountain murmurs its continual blessing. The massive parts of this gate were adorned with stucco reliefs of acanthus leaves and arabesques, most ingenious

and delicate, and with brilliantly colored inscriptions in majolica. We could see also the two pavilions with heavy, pyramidal, green roofs with their carved cedar cornices and their supporting columns of creamy, agèd marble, under the shadow of which the Faithful were performing their ritual ablutions. Thus the Idrisides, Almoravides, Almohades, Merinides and the sultans from the Saadi family all left something after them that forever attached their names to the walls of Kairween. Above all its beauty, as we saw it, stretched the flaming tent of the sky, while around it in the maze of commercial streets encircling its walls was the noise and movement of the outer world's life.

Kairween attracted me as strongly as Bab el-Maroukh, and I returned to it several times with the half hope that something would occur which would give me the opportunity to penetrate into this temple of the faith and science of Islam. However, nothing happened to cause a breach of the law of *horm*—that is, an actual breach of it, though in spirit I did transgress it, for I succeeded in learning much that went on within its walls and that is usually withheld from the knowledge of those without the Faith.

It came about through the meeting, mentioned above, with the mullah in the antique-shop, who turned out to be a professor in Kairween. As we sat drinking the heavily sweetened tea and chatting over the lighter subjects that sprang from selecting a beautifully bound copy of the Koran, Hafid, in his rôle of interpreter to a scholar, and even a Marabout, beamed with happiness and, with the master of the house, kissed the holy man's hand or

the hem of his bournous as often as it could be gracefully done.

My new-found friend answered my questions with the information that the university has fifty-two *ulema*, or teachers, and six hundred *tholba*, or students, from every part of North Africa. Though most of these are from seventeen to twenty years of age, some much older men also come to the institution to study. As there is no fixed period for a course and no restrictions upon the length of time a student may remain, a *thaleb* often continues in the institution from fifteen to twenty years and sometimes even longer. With the exception of the rich seekers after knowledge the students dwell together in dark, dirty cells, receive a small daily allowance of bread from the administration and live the life of beggars, almost always hungry and in rags both winter and summer. They work in shops or cafés and with tanners, weavers, carpenters and dyers, struggling with the phantom of death by starvation, which ever hovers round them. This seems to be the inevitable fate of students the world over, yet it does not prevent these beggars from becoming rich in wisdom, as witness Copernicus, Newton, Pasteur, Helmholtz and Metchnikoff; or from becoming saints, like Abu Median el-Andalosi of Tlemsen.

In support of the persistence of this idea of student poverty in Fez, Hafid, laughing gaily over the fate of his kind, told us of the visit of a student to a merchant.

"Who is knocking?" asked the master of the house.

"It is I, Ibrahim ben Ibn, a student," answered the guest. "I bring a letter from the worthy Sidi's partner."

"Slave," called the master of the house, "quickly bring in a bowl of food—a student has come!"

To enter the university one need only know *al-lugha* sufficiently to be able to read the Koran. This higher institution will give him the rest of his education, imparting this wisdom in the most primitive way. The professor sits on a slightly raised dais and does all his teaching from memory alone, reciting passages from the Koran and from the law, or *shariat*. The students listen to the words of the professor and endeavor to memorize them, often loudly repeating the verses after him but never making any notes or using the manuscripts or books which lie decaying in the libraries. Thus everything depends upon the memory and industrious attention of the student.

The first step in the teaching program deals with the theology of Islam and its traditions as set forth in the Hadith, which is in reality an extra-Koran collection of the words of the Prophet that were recorded in the minds of his contemporaries and handed down to posterity as a compendium of the accounts of his life and of his judgments on the phenomena of earthly existence. Following this the students are instructed in the laws of the Koran and of morality, in rhetoric, in the recitation of the ritual, in the grammar of *al-lugha*, in religious literature and *madih*, or sacred poetry, in metaphysics, in logic, in astrology, in the magic appertaining to the name of Allah and to figures, in the mysterious science of the manufacture of talismans, in the influence of good and bad spirits upon the fate of man, in the principles of medicine, in the

history and aims of religious sects and confraternities and in the lives of the saints.

While talking of the sciences taught in Kairween, the professor unconsciously turned the conversation into the channels that most interested him. From his talk I discovered that the learned teachers of the *medersa* often revert to the century-long dispute between the Sunnites and the Shiites regarding the descendants of Mahomet and the proper succession to the caliphate, that is, the religious and moral direction of the Moslem world. They occupy themselves with critical studies of the Hadith, looking for apochryphal passages. When referring to the well-known works of the Arabian scholars, Avenzoar, Averroës, Aviocenna, Abu'l-Kasim, Rashi and others, he spoke also of the revered magi, Jafar and Hermes el-Monshelleth, whom Edmond Doutté identifies as Hermes Trismegistus of Iflatoun, who was none other than Plato, and of Aristotalis, that is, Aristotle, whose theories formed a part of the system of Moslem science. These learned men of the faculty also study the theosophists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as Sohraverdi and Ibn el-Arabi, and read mystic and vulgar poets, among them Omar Khayyám, Hafiz and Omar el-Feridh.

"In what are the scholars of the faculty in Kairween particularly interested at present?" I asked the mullah in a pause.

"Of what nation are you?" he came back at me, question for question. When I began to explain to him the location of Poland, he interrupted with:

"Ah . . . Ah! That is Russia." My further attempts netted no better result, for the mullah only strengthened his previous assertion.

"That is the same thing, just as it is with us. Berbers of different tribes are always Berbers."

I was on the point of making further efforts at clarification, when the professor again interrupted with a statement that awakened my deepest curiosity.

"Now I shall tell you something which is a bond between you and ourselves," he said with the light of intense interest in his eyes. "A prophet existed, called Abd Allah, whom some maintained to be a true prophet, while others held him as false. Of himself he spoke as an unrevealed Imam, adding that the span of humanity is divided into eight periods, during each one of which a prophet is born, a prophet-messenger of Allah. Six of these periods have already passed and have counted their six prophets, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mahomet. Abd Allah proclaimed himself the Messiah of the seventh period. A year ago a letter from the Imams of the Russian Moslems was circulated in Maghreb, in which it was stated that we were to recognize the advent of the eighth period with the coming of the eighth prophet, or Messiah, Lenine, whose spiritual substitute in Africa was Abd el-Krim. This leader is to begin a Holy War that is to separate forever the Faithful from the unbelievers and to divide the earth into two parts, a pure one, where Islam shall flourish, and an impure one, the lands of the *rumis* (Europeans). It is to be accomplished in seven years and three weeks. Among the *ulema* of other Moslem countries there are many who accept this

message and believe it has a serious and true character, while others, especially among our group here, are of a different mind, as Abd Allah was certainly a heretic and a political adventurer."

"And what do you, Imam, think about the eighth period and the new Messiah?" I asked, as I nonchalantly lighted a cigarette, in order not to betray my emotion and curiosity. The mullah sat thinking profoundly, but, after a long silence, responded:

"I think that the time has come for all peoples to be free, to live their own life according to their particular faith and laws. Such a time has surely come, Sidi."

"I do not understand about what people the worthy scholar is speaking, as a great many nations believe in the Prophet."

The Kairween professor made a long answer to my query, from which I understood that for Islam Moslem nationalism does not exist. It recognizes only Moslems in one or another country with but slight differences in their specific moral laws. There is no such thing as pan-Arabism for an Arab, a Berber or a *fellah*; but they all foster and recognize a religious patriotism, which, in explosion, becomes a pan-Islamism and then overspreads and envelops the various Islamic peoples inhabiting the vast stretches of the earth from the Pacific and Indian Ocean westward to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. I further gathered that the propaganda for liberation flows into Maghreb from Turkey, Egypt and Tripolitania and also, to my great astonishment, from Paris, though the professor did not indicate the exact sources and perhaps himself knew nothing about these. It was

likewise clear to me that my interlocutor was a partisan neither of violent change nor of Holy War, but that he hoped the white race would properly evaluate the situation and come to understand the psychology of Islam and would consequently direct the course of events into other and more tranquil channels. Referring to this he added: "Such thoughts are germinating deeply in the souls of the Faithful, and everybody is waiting to see what the white race will do here, in Egypt, in India and in all those parts of the Moslem world where they look upon us as dying peoples and refuse to recognize in us the powerful fire which lights our spiritual life."

The scholar was terrified at the thought of war, which had already begun in Egypt, in parts of Syria and in Spanish Morocco. He told me that the unrest among the scattered tribes in the south of French Morocco and the revolt in the north cannot be taken to be disconnected phenomena but are instigated and controlled from one or two general centers, for staffs directing the Moslem movement for liberty and superintending the general Holy War are located in Anatolia, Kurdistan, Egypt and the Spanish Rif. The watchwords of pan-Islamism and of political communism become strangely mixed in these staff headquarters, but the agents of both currents work together. Partisans of the Holy War have great hope in Abd el-Krim, who has already distinguished himself in the fighting against the Spaniards. Many Moslem officers who have gone through the military academy for Moslems in Russia are known to be in his army, while agents spreading propaganda against the white race can be met in every corner of the country. Yet these agents



restrain the most hot-headed among the fanatical followers of the Prophet from irresponsible and bootless attempts, advising rather the formation of organized units that will be ready for concerted action whenever a general movement may be proclaimed.

All this that the mullah told me in Fez I later verified in other places in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia through talks with natives and colonists. Also I learned accidentally that a Moslem congress took place at Baku on September 8th, 1920, under the aegis of Russia and in the presence of Enver Pasha, in the deliberations of which three delegates from French North Africa, sent by a native organization in Paris, as well as eight delegates from Egypt participated. While I was still north of the Mediterranean, I likewise learned that Amanullah Khan, the Amir of Afghanistan, had accepted the conception of the early prophet, Abd Allah, and had recognized Lenine as the Messiah of the eighth historic period, regarding himself as the Messiah's vice-regent in Asia.

Before he finished, the mullah of Kairween said with real sadness and impressive seriousness:

"The white men have in their Holy Writ the principle of love for their fellow-men, but this has remained only in writing. Verily, what are you doing among yourselves in your own countries? You drown your soil in blood, you perpetrate hideous crimes, you kill the divine spirit in you with your fighting for gold, for luxury and for power over other peoples. Each nation ought to live according to the law which Allah gave to it, a law that resides in the soul. One nation ought to help another and not persecute it. Your faith has drifted far away from

the precepts of the Prophet Aïssa, as the strong in your land persecute the weak, the rich dominate the poor and your scholars despise the illiterate. In your country every man is the enemy of every other; every one is compelled by the conditions of life to struggle interminably for existence and therefore each envies the other, seeing in him a competitor, an enemy, a persecutor. Nothing unites you, neither a common faith, rigid morals nor science. These states are as a building made without cement, with no binding power between the individual stones that compose them. You have ravaged one another in a war which has terrified the non-Christian world with its unimaginable crimes, its cruelty and its blind madness. The fabric of your states has been rent asunder, families and societies have been broken up, and you cannot rise up to indulge again in the madness of strife. You came to the colored peoples with words of simulated love—and what have you done? You have regarded and used us not as men but as cattle, necessary to the accomplishment of your aims. You thought that you could do what you wished with us, could take from us our lands and the results of our toil, could change our customs and faith, so as to be able to make of us slaves, without rights and obedient to you, because we were weak, hungry, illiterate and consequently powerless in the face of your science, your machines, your carbines and your cannon. But we also have our science, a spiritual science, while yours is that of the material.

“Now you seek to take from us our moral leader and abolish the caliphate, raising by your action a storm of intrigue and ill will. When we protest, you laugh; but we

believe that all which we possess is the gift of Allah. In our Holy Book Allah ordered us to defend the caliphate. The white man believes that the strength of the mailed fist is a sufficient argument to overcome our faithfulness to Islam. Do you think that we are animals and can understand such reasoning only? Do you yourselves understand anything else? What have we to do now? We are waiting for you to change your ideas regarding us, to realize that you must alter your politics and relations toward us. If this does not come about, I am not sure that there is anywhere an individual or an organization throughout the Moslem countries that will have power enough to stay the explosion among the followers of the Prophet."

As the mullah was delivering himself of these strong feelings, I was trying to think where I had heard or read similar arguments. Had not Rabindranath Tagore written the same thoughts? Did not the Indian Moslem delegation voice the same in 1920 when it arrived in London to discuss the question of the caliphate? However my memory may have served me, I heard the argument delivered in unmistakable sincerity there in Fez el-Bali near the old *medersa*—and the French Staff!

"Since my arrival in Africa," I rejoined to the mullah, "I have nowhere seen persecution of the natives by the local authorities. On the contrary, it seems to me that France has, to a marked degree, a psychological policy that takes into consideration and builds for a future in which the population of the country will be able to share in the Western civilization, adapt its cult to the new life and collaborate with Europe."

"Yes," he answered without more than a moment's thought, "Marshal Lyautey, Governor Steeg and others among the French officials are wise administrators, who do not offend the feelings of the Moslems; but for the previous mistakes of France and of other nations the whole white race will have to pay. It is difficult to keep judgment based on sound reason in a moment of upheaval. You are for us of an alien temperament, as your spirit becomes the slave of the body and the feeling of divine justice has been transformed in you into something that will explain and justify your crimes. Riches have been made the aim of your life, gold your god. You gain wealth by the hands of slaves, forcing them into silence, humility and toil for you alone. Your quarrels, wars and mutual deceits have stripped the mask from the Christian face, your lips have uttered false words of love, and your hands launch deadly arrows and forge chains. You are unwilling to realize that the time has come when the great spirit of liberty moves from one end of the earth to the other, visiting each house, looking into the smallest tent and everywhere calling the people to rise and receive their heritage.

"When the world of the yoked ones shall be free, then it will be decided according to the Divine Law what we are to take from your civilization and how we are to give to it of our spirit. Then the era of peace and happiness will reign throughout the earth."

The scholar had worked himself up to such a pitch of feeling that he abandoned all caution, while our host, the merchant, was momentarily more filled with concern and,

as soon as the mullah had left, led me back from the door to the interior of the shop and whispered:

"It was the mullah who spoke. I was silent. Remember well, Sidi, that I was silent throughout it all."

Hafid was also a little afraid and spoke with feeling, as we left the shop:

"You saw that the merchant lowered the blinds and locked the door when the *alem* began to speak so wildly. He gave vent to evil thoughts, very evil indeed."

"But I presume he spoke only as people here think."

"Not all, sir, not all," he warmly protested, looking almost beseechingly into my eyes.

After this talk among Moorish antiquities and beautiful Koran bindings I was depressed and could not shake off the strong impression which the words of the Moslem scholar had made upon me. I could not fail to recognize the justness of some of the Eastern man's statements, yet at the same time the foreboding of coming events that might again rock all humanity frightened and saddened me. I had the strong conviction that, even if I were a citizen of one of the nations most inimical to France, I could not accuse her, after what I had already seen, of any serious dereliction in her colonization policy in Africa. Perhaps, from the standpoint of the purely material exploitation of the country, the French policy is not energetic enough, a fact that may be explained by many and various reasons, one of which is indubitably the general reluctance of the French peasant to leave his native land. On the other hand, the French have chosen a course well adapted to our stormy times, in that it does

not run counter to, nor stir up the antagonism of, the native population and, at the same time, carries with it the best features of European civilization.

Undoubtedly, if the only great question at issue were the agitation stirred up by the attitude toward the caliphate, France would find a way of resolving the dilemma; but there are in play exterior influences which have no direct relationship with the Moslem movement. Chief among these we must place the propaganda of Soviet Russia, who thinks not so much of communism but of fomenting trouble, of a new war and of the way to augment the difficulties of those nations who look upon the Kremlin and its masters with suspicion and distrust.

In North Africa I felt strongly the geographical advance of the anti-European, or general Asiatic, front which has been aligned by Moscow, extending its ramifications through Turkey and Egypt into the lands to the south of the Mediterranean, seeking to reach the Atlantic and aiming thus to encircle Europe not only on the east but also round through the south. Do not the European statesmen see and understand this patent fact? Do they not sense the pressing necessity of changing the general European attitude for one of defense and, what is imminently demanded now, of re-establishing their ancient prestige, which has all but disappeared from the minds of the colored peoples?

These colored races are carried along by the spirit of the times, by this wish for freedom from overlordship and for independence, which is being fomented by a wisely directed propaganda, energized and supported by ample capital. These people give no thought to the days

when, free and independent, they will be left to the fate of exposure to tribal quarrels, dynastic intrigues, epidemics and hunger without the necessary strength, science, system or technical means to combat them. The colored man does not recognize the fact that absolute liberty today would spell degeneration and death for him, and for Islam the end of its unity—consequently, catastrophe. These nations are blind to the example of China and Russia, who have lost their morals and the guiding and regulating power of faith and are now waiting for the help that is expected from somewhere and about which every one is vaguely dreaming, giving little thought to what may be its source, its basis and its imposed conditions.

However, such is the story of something over a billion colored men with Soviet Russia as their self-appointed leader, a striking phenomenon which every Occidental nation ought to take seriously into account, pondering upon and preparing its defense against an extreme expression of this attitude. I feel that, if the statesmen of Europe would in sober earnestness examine this common problem, a single plan and a single moral front could be elaborated and approved—a general policy which would bring peace to Europe, would calm and sober the colored races, would paralyze the propaganda of Soviet Russia and would offer the best chance of ushering in a general peace on earth, where for centuries the so-called civilized nations have followed mistaken and, as experience has proved, dangerous paths.

Although I have a strong and real sympathy for “the subjugated,” I have also my native feeling for Western

civilization and, after my experience on two continents which are innately hostile to Christianity and with my intimate knowledge of Russia, gained through lifelong residence, I distinctly see that the "liberty" about which the colored races dream would lead them today only to their destruction. I realize that the old psychology of nationalist policies, this ethnic egoism, in the fundamentals of which one cannot find the forces that will defend and conserve the moral and psychic national characteristics but only those that further and expand nationalistic materialism, is leading a blind Europe to the edge of a precipice. Though I realize this, still, having faith in the creative instinct of the Aryan race, I believe that among all the races it is only the Aryan that can direct the current of the tragic life of humanity into other and less turbulent channels and that, having succeeded in creating a material world organization, it will find within itself sufficient strength and idealism to evolve a moral organization comprising all mankind.

These thoughts shaped themselves in my mind, as we visited with Hafid the different *medersas* of old Fez—Meshabia, Sahridj, Attarine, Sherratine, Seffarine and finally Bu Anania. I need not describe all these old buildings, which stand as architectural memorials to long-dead masters, with their age-yellow marbles bought and paid for with the ransoms derived from the liberation of Spanish and Italian prisoners; their cedar carvings, black with age; their ceilings and walls, still carrying the gold and brilliant colors of other centuries and their smooth-worn, graceful fountains, as there is a great similarity between these features in all the old Moorish architecture.



Only a specialist, versed in the historical lore of the land, would be able to elucidate the indications of epochs and periods and read into the changes and additions the spirit of the times in which they were made.

But one feature of them sharply arrested my attention. All of these buildings, strongly constructed with a view to giving them a duration a-down the centuries, all these monuments of the golden age of Moorish art are now in decay. Although in previous generations the same process was going on, the incoming dynasty, in a spirit of piety or of rivalry with the rulers whom they had supplanted, repaired, strengthened and ornamented the decaying temples and *medersas*. Today it is all quite different. Even in Morocco life has become very difficult, full of contradictions and influenced by neighboring states and various external conditions. There are no men, no means, no time to conserve properly the houses of prayer, when the army and politics devour everybody and everything. In the meantime the mosques, minarets and *medersas* are in danger of falling to pieces, and with their decay the Andalusian Moorish art is threatened with extinction not only in Fez but throughout all Morocco. The French dream of maintaining these buildings in repair, having even prepared plans for the restoration of most of them; but this task is even many times more difficult and dangerous than the alteration of the water-system of Fez. Owing to the present-day tendencies among the natives the best and wholly disinterested intentions can bring with their execution quite unexpected and disagreeable results, while Time never withdraws for a day from the battle-front and keeps up an incessant attack upon

the works of the Idrisides, Almohades and Merinides.

Our visits to these places consecrated to science and to the Faith gave us the opportunity of making the acquaintance of some *tholba*, comrades of our Hafid, with whom we rambled about the town, listening to their chatter that continuously disclosed to us new and interesting recesses in the great, conglomerate life of Fez. The great majority of these students live in the *medersas*, where they have ever before them what still persists of the treasures of the art of their country, while the remaining small minority have lodgings about the town. One can meet among these *tholba* dreamers, poets, practical men preparing for professions, especially the law, and ascetics, who spend their days in prayer, in exercises in concentration and in study. From these are drawn the future *ulema*, Imams and, sometimes, even Marabouts. It is not unusual for a student, on leaving the university, to purchase the key of his cell against the time when he may wish to return to his Alma Mater and retire for a time within its sanctuary to rest from the noise and difficulties of life, to meditate and thus to restore order to his harassed thoughts and feelings.

Being like their brothers the world over, the Fez students occasionally create disturbances, take part in revolutionary movements and protests and, besides breaking the far-from-luxurious course of their ordinary lives with occasional feasts, have their own societies, usually formed on the affiliating lines of the tribal extraction of the individuals or because of membership in, or leanings towards, some religious confraternity. Only the ascetics



by the conventional ceremonies and duties of court régime, the sultan has always, however, time to institute certain changes and reforms in the student-life, sometimes nothing more drastic, it must be admitted, than the promulgation of an edict on the repainting of the *tholba's* cells or on the increase of the daily bread-ration granted by the authorities of the *medersas* to the students. During this one day of power the law of the students runs unrestricted throughout the whole town, acknowledged and tolerated even by the Bashaw of Fez, as he knows that at midnight the dynasty of the sultan of a day will crumble and disappear without a trace, save for the memory of an unusual commotion in the streets and for heaps of mutton-bones and other broken meats of the feast.

## CHAPTER XI

### SLAVERY—BLACK AND RED

ONE day I paid a visit to the commander of the Fez district, the very able General de Chambrun, formerly military attaché to the French Embassy in Washington. Taking me to the large map of the district, he explained with marked frankness and sincerity the situation at the front, where the French forces were from time to time in conflict with the tribes that refused to recognize the authority of the Sultan of Morocco. His very evident candor rather astonished me, as I am familiar with the ordinary attitude of headquarter staffs and their tendency to mysteriousness. When I made some allusion to this, the General responded seriously:

“I could repeat to any one what I have said to you, for France has nothing to hide here. We are acting in accordance with the Treaty of Algeciras and are carrying out our engagements with the sultan in the protectorate of Morocco. We do not want war, but we cannot allow tribes, that are wild and have no comprehension of either the situation or our task, to place obstacles in the way of our civilizing mission. When the fighting is over, we at once go to the unruly tribes with the offerings of peace—we make roads, build hospitals, organize markets and

help them in their agriculture. You will be able to see all this for yourself, as I shall arrange for you to visit our northern front, which follows along the Spanish Rif and on which some operations are now in progress."

Afterwards the General presented me to some of the members of his staff, who had been working for long periods in Morocco, and later, at a luncheon to which he had invited my wife and myself, to other officers and officials of his command. Thanks to the guiding suggestions and to the assistance of General de Chambrun and his staff, as well as to the courtesy of the French administrative authorities, I succeeded in coming into touch with many of the features of the life of this country which are not revealed to the casual traveler and I am most happy to acknowledge my gratitude to them for this.

After we had returned to our hotel and had rested for a while, I called Hafid and asked him if he had planned to show us the mosque of Mulay Idris, which some of the officers had commended to us as the Mecca of Fez. With a smile our young guide answered:

"I wanted to acquaint you first with the science, politics and art of the capital, afterwards with its faith and every-day life. However, if you so prefer, I shall begin with this last and shall show you our city at its best, that is, in the evening."

Immediately behind Bu Anania and quite up to the gate of Bab Futuh across the river, spreads a labyrinth of innumerable commercial streets. In some of these, which are open to the sky and flooded with the molten sunshine, one can breathe more freely only where the

shadow of some minaret stands guard and throws its protecting mantle across the way. Others are more or less shaded by squares of ragged cloth, by mats of straw or reeds, by woven willow and laurel twigs or by dense growths of vines that are led across trellises.

Fez el-Bali, owing to its science and art, occupies in the world of Islam a place comparable with that of Constantinople and Bagdad, possessing every element of life within its limits—schools and temples, wise *ulema*, God-fearing Imams, an aristocracy with a fine artistic sense and with a thorough grounding in politics and, near them, enterprising manufacturers and merchants, distributing their products to the Sudan, Senegal, Egypt and the country of the Bantu Negroes. It is possible that they gained this spirit of commercial enterprise through the infusion of Jewish blood, as masses of Hebrews, not wishing in the time of the Sultan Yakub Abd el-Hakk, to obey the command for all Jews to go and live in the despised quarter, or Mellah, accepted Islam and in time intermarried with Berbers, producing a mixed type with strong Jewish appearance and characteristics. This Fezan bourgeoisie controls the economic and commercial life of the city, managing all the greater undertakings and leaving only the lesser commerce to the Jews of the Mellah.

All the commercial operations of the Moroccan wholesalers are carried through in the *kisaria*, or market, in the *fonduks*, or warehouses, or in the innumerable *suks* with their unending rows of shops. Each branch of commerce or industry groups itself together in a sort of clan, having its common interests and its more or less unified commercial policy, directed by a council of merchants

forming an exchange. In some of the industrial *suks* where manual industry predominates, as well as in the manufacture of majolica and porcelain for the mosaics in houses and temples, the best merchants employ workers who hold and guard as heirlooms the formulas, designs and craftsmanship of the old, refined Andalusian art. These workers form a separate corporation, have their own mosque and their own patron saints and live on the farther bank of the river in that part of Fez el-Bali which was originally built and inhabited by Andalusian Moors, who for a long time were hostile to the emigrants from Kairwan. Some painters, weavers, designers and book-binders belong also to this corporation. They produce only repetitions of old historical patterns and, it is said, not one of these artists ever allows himself to create any independent or new design, a circumstance which has led to the preservation in their purity of the most beautiful old Moorish patterns. It is left to artisans and masters not belonging to the corporation to indulge themselves in "decadent" and modern creations. It is interesting to note that in the patterns used on majolica ware one finds Persian, Syrian and Chinese motives, as well as others from the pre-Greek period in Cyprus, an influence that can be explained by the mingling of the Moors with Eastern peoples during pilgrimages to Mecca or expeditions to Persia, India and even to China. Also I was interested to hear from Hafid that this potters' *suk* boasted its own saint, Sidi Mimun, who was at once a potter and a scholar and, when resting from his wheel, taught his pupils the divine language of the Koran.



All of these *suks* lead toward the center of Fez el-Bali, where a barrier encloses the Medina, or the sacred heart of Fez, and where a *zaouia*, or chapel, as large as an ordinary mosque, stands as a consecrated memorial to the great Sultan of Fez, Mulay Idris, whose ashes repose there in the very midst of the town which he built and raised to the position of power, wealth and splendor. The wooden barrier, or fence, stands as the strong line of separation between the busy *suks* where the heathen god, Mercury, rules and the sacred precincts of the Moslem shrine. Although only the Faithful could previously enter the consecrated place, we unbelievers are now also allowed to visit it, though we are compelled to bend and pass under this fence that protects it as a guarding screen. Is this, perhaps, not a symbol thought of by Islam to make us show outward respect to Allah and the Prophet?

As we bowed and entered, we found ourselves in quite another world with other men, other thoughts and another atmosphere. Even the hum and bustle of the *suks* strikes no echo here. Yet the quarter was far from empty, as all its streets were crowded, but with a quiet, flowing stream of pilgrims coming from near and distant towns and villages to this most revered religious center of all Morocco; with beggars and sick folk, seeking relief; with processions of various religious fraternities, chanting and carrying their banners aloft; with sellers of colored candles, oil and incense and with the conglomerate mixture of religious enthusiasts, Imams and even Marabouts, who were easily identified by the homage paid them by those of the Faithful who kissed their hands and raised the hem of their bournouses to their lips, to

which marks of respect the saints responded by a touch of the hand on the heads that bent before them.

Though in the streets of Fez the inhabitants seem to have little curiosity in a passing European and even the beggars seldom ask alms of him, here in the Medina it was quite otherwise, for within this sacred enclosure a white man is looked upon with hostility, contempt and hate. It is not at all unusual to be greeted here with inimical words and vicious remarks.

Once well within the barrier we stopped near a temple wall, just beside a large box for the offerings of the Faithful. The crowd observed us in silence and with such expressions in their eyes that it was easy to sense the presence of suppressed feeling. We put some silver coins in the box and took post at a little distance to watch for a moment the passing stream. A few slightly propitiated voices were heard in the crowd, where many discreetly elbowed their neighbors, as they indicated us with their eyes for a moment and then passed on. There was only one who stared at me so persistently that I was finally compelled to turn in his direction and scrutinize him most carefully. At first I took him to be a woman, for he showed a pale, blanched face without a hair on it, fiery eyes, narrow, compressed lips, a slender figure shrouded in a black bournous, small, pampered hands and feet shod in European shoes. After taking in these features at a glance, I again sought the eyes of my close observer.

"A strange face with not one Arab feature," I mused to myself. At the same moment the small man lowered his gaze, pulled the bournous further over his face and

turned back into the crowd, making some remark as he did so that brought out a half-suppressed laugh.

We turned to watch a strange, colorful picture that was just being unrolled before our eyes. A crowd was pressing under an arcade to kiss a wall covered with a colored stucco decoration in relief and was regarding, with the rapture of ecstasy, the large tracery window supported on two thin columns of pink marble. Three immense oil-lanterns of exquisite workmanship were kept burning night and day before this wall. Behind it in the interior of the temple are the tombs of Mulay Idris and another saint.

As we passed to the front of this chapel, we found at the entrance an immense, carved mahogany screen, which separates the ante-room from the interior, where numerous lamps and candles, in the half-twilight which they themselves created, gave life and brilliance to the gold and enamel that covers the walls and ceiling. The Faithful stopped at the door, kissed the door-posts and, kneeling, prayed to the One God, beside Whom there is none other. The mosque was filled with long rows of Moslems in prayer, kneeling or sitting with crossed legs, raising their hands to heaven, then humbly bowing their heads until their foreheads touched the mosaics of the floor.

*"La Illah Illah Allah u Mahommed Rassul Allah Akbar!"* rose from everywhere, accompanied by deep sighs, groans, chants and fervent supplications, while the eyes of these burned with the flame of hope that inspired their petitions. At such a time not one among those at prayer will pay any attention or give heed to a passer-by, even though he might be a strange foreigner, nor will

they be disturbed by anything that may happen round them. In such wise does the follower of the Prophet pray in the mosque, near the *kubba* of a saint or out on the desert at the hours of sunrise and sunset. At such times one feels that the Moslem does not despise the unbeliever, but is only proud, because he, a mortal and sinful man, has received from Allah the right to speak directly with him at these daily hours of prayer, when Allah comes so near to him and has such confidence in the *numen* that it stirs his pride and inspires in him the fires of faith.

As we passed out of the Medina, the muezzin, having finished his call to evening prayer, was descending from the minaret of Mulay Idris, and twilight had already begun to soften and blend the heat and brilliance of the day.

Later in the evening, as I was out again with Hafid, he suddenly stopped abruptly in the midst of an explanation, put his finger to his lips, pressed me back into the shadow of a wall and motioned me to watch what was happening down the street we were crossing. I looked and beheld a strange scene. There at the next corner some merchants in white bournouses stood within the circle of light from a large lamp and partially surrounded an unusual group. Three entirely naked natives with Negro features were alternately turning round, and bending over, and lifting a heavy stone and stretching out their arms. Near them and within the circle of the merchants another man held their bournouses, slapped the natives on their necks and shoulders and spoke with evident excitement and persuasion to the group of observers. Then

the merchants felt the feet, chests and hands of the blacks and spoke in response to the man's representations to them. Hafid bent close to me and whispered:

"We must keep perfectly quiet, in order not to frighten these men. Just there begins the *suk* El-Ghezel, formerly the slave *suk*. Christians oppose slavery, while Moslems preserve this ancient institution, as the Koran does not forbid it but only prescribes that the treatment of the slaves shall be good. The traffic is carried on secretly in Fez, but more boldly in the south, where the authority over, and lifting a heavy stone and stretching out their The slaves who are brought here and sold are purchased in the Sudan and in Central Africa. If the *abd* knows a little of our law, he can ask for a contract, setting forth the period of his slavery and granting him liberty and the status of a citizen at the end of his servitude."

"And women?" I asked.

"These are not brought into the market, owing to the fear of the French authorities; yet women slaves exist and are sold from hand to hand, only with greater secrecy and with much more of an air of mystery than is observed in handling the men."

As we watched, the slaves put their rags of bournouses over themselves and went away in the midst of the group, leaving me there in the shadow with Hafid to ponder over the quite unexpected revelation of the night. Slavery, with good treatment of the purchased human being, a contract and the possibility of gaining liberty and citizenship, with the almost unavoidable attachment that grows up under these conditions in the family for the slave and in the slave for the family of his master—the

arrangement is only a form and may be better than the conditions existing in many European mines and factories, where men are condemned by the necessities of life to a servitude that often brings them premature death or an old age of illness and misery. Later in some Arabian homes I saw slaves and found that the master of the house treated with equality the honored guest, his brother and the slave who serves the meal or trots before his master's mule to clear a way for him through the crowd.

Following this unexpected contact with the traffic in slaves, while the Moroccan night, with the star-set black mantle of the sky lying close over the earth, hid and blurred the operations, Hafid led me the next day into a very different quarter of the city. Al-Bekri, the Arabian *arbiter elegantiarum*, poet, traveler and connoisseur of wine, art, horses, and arms as well as confidant of the powerful Omaiyyades, who reigned in Seville at the beginning of the eleventh century, visited Fez and has left an account of the two sections into which the capital of Maghreb was then divided by the river and separate encircling walls, *Adua* el-Kairween and *Adua* el-Andaluse. In the former dwelt those who had come from Kairwan, fine-looking men, loving art, poetry, science and an easy, gay life. Their houses were set in gardens traversed by artificial canals bringing to them the clean, wholesome water of mountain streams and filled with the finest varieties of lemons, pomegranates, figs and apricots and with grapes of all colors. Art, commerce and the cult of the Prophet were the foundations of the life in this quarter of that Fez which lived a thousand years ago.

On the opposite shore of the river, which then turned the wheels of a hundred mills, lay the smaller quarter of el-Andaluse, famous for its courageous, strong, industrious men, skilled in agriculture and trade, and for its women of such beauty that they were the dream of the rich masters from Meknes, Marrakesh and Tlemsen and were reputed to have been the reason for numerous expeditions against Fez. Whatever may be the accuracy of this imputation, it is certain that these houris of Spanish extraction were the reason for long-continued combats and strife between the two *aduas*, as they charmed the men from across the river and witnessed many a fight between the partisans of the two walled towns on one of the neighboring hills, chosen for these tilts.

With time wise rulers of the capital ordered the destruction of the walls facing each other across the river and the building of three bridges to connect these sections of the town, all of which naturally led to the intermingling of the two tribes, so that now nothing remains to distinguish them save the traditional laws and principles of the old Andalusian art.

As we wandered through this Andalusian quarter with Hafid, we came upon a striking picture, which called back to my mind all these tales of the eleventh-century chronicler and built anew for me the romance of those days. Rounding a corner, we came upon a stately old Moor, clad in a bournous dirty with his potter's clay, sitting by his wheel and shaping a graceful jar with the deft, skilled hand of an old craftsman. Near the potter stood a swarthy young girl with naked arms and breast, bearing a pitcher of water on her shoulder. A lamb pressed itself

against her knee. The face and eyes of the girl were alight with feeling, as she stood gazing up at an Arab dressed in a thin, white bournous and a turban, tied with a dark-blue cord. He sat a fine, sleek horse, whose golden coat, all flecked with foam, gleamed in the rays of the burning sun. As we watched, the rider bent low and spoke to the girl, frequently touching his hand to his heart, his mouth and his brow. Evidently he was taking leave of both of them and was gazing for a last time into the dark eyes of this Andalusian maid, whose hand he surely was coming one day to claim. The picture, in its setting of old walls, gray-green olive-trees and blue sky, fired the imagination and left us with a lovely bit of sentiment and color by which to remember this romantic quarter.

It was also here, outside the gate, Bab Futuh, that we came upon a scene of quite another character, though filled with interest for me. A large group surrounded three men on horseback, one of whom, clad in a black bournous, had raised himself up in his large Moorish stirrups and was addressing those below him, as he pointed toward the town. On our approach the speaker became silent and drew his bournous closer about him. I was struck with something little short of astonishment to see again the pallid, feminine face, the tight-drawn lips and the unmistakable eyes of the man who had scrutinized me so closely near the shrine of Mulay Idris in the Medina. I had no more than time for a fleeting observation before the rider swung his horse round and led his companions off at full gallop in the direction of Bab Futuh.



"Who is this man in the black bournous?" I asked of Hafid.

"I do not recognize him, but, judging by his dress and face, I am sure he is a foreigner, probably from Tunis or, perhaps, a *hadj* from far away."

We bought some pomegranates and regaled ourselves with this juicy, refreshing fruit as we returned to the town.

There was much that we had yet to see and much that we did see with Hafid which one may not even take the time to mention. There was all the quarter of the Mellah, with the shops of the Jewish merchants, and there was also Fez el-Jdid, or "New" Fez, illustrating in its name how delightfully relative some of the more ancient quarters of the world humorously permit themselves to be; for this parvenu among the sections of the capital dates from the dynasty of the Merinides at the end of the thirteenth century. Then there was the French quarter to add to the Mellah, Fez el-Jdid and Fez el-Bali, making in all four different worlds, which the minaret of Mulay Idris and the Kairween *medersa* morally and physically dominate with silent and certain power. It is there within Kairween that the most zealous of the Faithful forget, or, more accurately strive not to remember, that unbelievers are here within the circle of these ancient city walls, which have long sheltered those who have received before the very face of Allah the spiritual strength, the pride in Islam and the strong faith in that Fate which is to bring them power and splendor in reward for their fidelity to the Law of the Prophet.

I was musing over all this one day as I walked alone

from the Meshwar in the direction of El-Douh, when suddenly I felt some one touch my arm and turned to find close to me the young man with the feminine face, holding his black mantle close about him. Without speaking, I waited to see what this mysterious person would say.

"*Medersas, dars, fonduks, kisarias, . . .*" he recited in a grave, penetrating voice, separating each word from the other.

"I don't understand," I answered with a shrug of my shoulders.

The stranger lowered his eyes for a second, as if he were troubled, raised them quickly and whispered in Russian:

"When did you come from Russia?"

I hesitated a moment, then answered in the same tongue:

"Not very long ago," at which he smiled and answered:

"The work is everywhere going forward."

I realized that I had before me either a Communist agent or a spy and asked:

"What work?"

He was evidently confused and, wrapping himself in his bournous, soon lost himself in the crowd. Once after this I met this mysterious man near the gate, Bab Gwissa, while Hafid and I were listening to a wandering bard. He was passing through the crowd, and had apparently not seen me, though he must have felt my presence and my constant gaze, for he suddenly turned and walked away. It reminded me of the days in Siberia in 1919,

when Tartar and Bashkir mullahs and *ulema* came on missions of propaganda to the Kirghiz camps and to the Moslem soldiers fighting in the army of Admiral Kolchak. My mysterious friend bore the marks of a Tartar from the Volga region and could easily have been a Soviet agent, or even a double representative for both Abd el-Krim and the Soviets, who support every anti-European movement in the hope of fostering trouble and disloyalty among the people of those lands which refuse to recognize and adopt the criminal ideology of Moscow, where the *kubba* of the false Messiah, Lenine, raises itself beside the walls of the Kremlin as an arrogant mausoleum, defying all that civilization has striven for—faith, morals and the creative thought of the Aryan race—and predicating the wane of power and the demoralization and madness of Europe.

Distracted from the tale of the bard, I found myself wondering over the unexpected conglomeration of individuals that now rub elbows in this holy city of Africa. The great Mulay Idris surely never dreamed that in this Rome, Paris, Lourdes, Oxford and Mecca which he had initiated within one encircling wall the unfaithful *Nasara* and *Ihud* (Christians and Jews) would dwell and exercise their power. His Fez of today has been obliged to submit to close contact with Europeans and to some degree of protection from them; yet between this mute acceptance and the goal of confidence and friendship the distance is greater than the long way from the founder's mosque to thrice-blessèd Mecca. The two currents of Moslem and foreigner run side by side in their own separate channels but without mixing in any way. A Berber or an Arab

may take something from the European life he sees about him, after he has most carefully considered and estimated its value, but he gives nothing in return save a silent appreciation, closely akin to a mild irony and entirely devoid of any thought of assimilation. These desert folk have, for instance, realized the value of European medicine and readily profit by it, even going so far as to ask the doctors to attend their sick wives; yet, at the same time, they retain their appreciation of the good influence of magic talismans, formulas against djinns and of healing pilgrimages to the tombs of Idris, Harazem and Sidi Bu Ghaleb.

## CHAPTER XII

### IN AN OUTPOST OF THE RIF

THANKS to the graciousness of General de Chambrun, who knew of my love for shooting, I was invited to go out with a party of officers for my first day on the African field. Though a year at my desk in Warsaw had filched from me much of the endurance I had gained during my wanderings and hard life on the plains and in the mountains of Asia, it had not taken my enthusiasm for a new discovery in ornithology, which came with the first partridge out of the many which I subsequently shot during my African trip. The bird proved to be a rock-partridge, the *Caccabis petrosa*, or *Perdix rubra*, and, to my surprise, was constantly flushed from the branches on the shady side of olive- and fig-trees, a fact which was explained to me by the French officers as a question of defense by the birds against the numerous foxes and jackals which hunted them relentlessly. They added also that there was no other species of the partridge found in the north of French Africa and that one must go to the edge of the Sahara for the gray variety, which they designate locally as the English partridge. As a matter of fact, I later came upon a covey of these latter birds between the oases of Berguent and Figig.

The morning following our day in the field I was taken by one of the staff cars in another direction and into more serious surroundings, that is, to the north to visit the front. The car was carrying two officers who were to be left at an intermediate post. The road led first in the direction of Tasa but soon turned and followed the valley of the Fez, becoming a strategic highway, along which we frequently passed heavy military camions, laden with soldiers or materials, that told a story of what was going on to the north. The country was mountainous with large valleys between the ranges and was well peopled and rich. Fields of wheat, maize and sorghum, vineyards, fig- and olive-orchards stretched away in all directions, while higher up on the mountain slopes numerous herds were pasturing.

As we passed through this fertile land, I noticed frequently that the French had impounded the waters from all the springs in the country and had led life-giving streams to the villages and farms below. Along the way we flushed large coveys of partridges that rose from near the river and settled in the palm-thicket on the slopes above. While the car stopped to allow the chauffeur to put in water and oil, I wandered afield and succeeded in bringing down two more of my old acquaintances from the eastern branches of the Altai, near Lake Shira-Kul and the valleys of Urianhai. Searching for others, I went farther into the brush and was rewarded by the sight of a jerboa, or *Dipus aegypticus*, a small rodent resembling a hare but with such short forelegs and such long ones aft that it gives the impression of possessing only these two larger ones. It leaped away in great hur-

ried jumps, looking, with its long, thin tail, quite like a miniature kangaroo.

At a distance of some twenty-five miles we turned away from the river and crossed a large plain that brought us into foot-hills which were dotted with Berber villages and farms. Though the lands were rich and fertile, the people were most miserably clad, among them well-to-do villagers in such rags as would have put to shame a *meskin* of Fez. Flocks of sheep, guarded by biblical-looking shepherds in white robes and with long curved staffs in their hands, were grazing on the prairie grass.

After leaving the two officers at the camp of Aïn Aïcha, we crossed the Sbu on a pontoon-bridge and entered upon the last twenty-five miles of our journey over a road that was just in course of construction. Everywhere we passed large gangs of native workers, occupied in gathering and breaking stones and in shaping the road-bed. Hundreds of these Berber laborers were directed by a single overseer, unarmed and without any guard. I have seen much work done by Russians in Central Asia, Manchuria and even in their own country of Siberia and have always found each engineer and technical assistant armed and accompanied by a Cossack guard, without which they have very often been afraid to enter the work-area. In contrast to this, in North Africa I visited many towns with small French administrative staffs having a guard of only ten or twenty spahis, Berbers or Arabs. In the upper Atlas, in the mountains of Algeria among the Kabyles, on the borders of the Sahara and here on the edge of the revolted Rif I met solitary overseers, state

agriculturalists and veterinaries, surrounded by the sea of natives and working among them without fear, without any means of defense and even at times without telephonic communication with administrative or military posts.

What is the reason behind this? Are the followers of the Prophet so peaceful or do they understand so well the beneficial work of these solitary Europeans? Are the foreigners respected and appreciated by the natives because they endeavor to learn and respect the psychology of these lands? I was too short a time in Africa to formulate a satisfactory answer to this really exceptional phenomenon. I found it at least very characteristic of the two races and consider it a most encouraging feature in their political outlook.

At the end of our run through beautiful country and prosperous-looking settlements we came to the village of Taunat, smothered in olive- and fig-orchards and set in a circle of green-clad mountains, whose sides were covered with fields of millet and wheat. The inhabitants met us most amiably and directed us on to the outposts of Taunat, perched on an overlooking hill as a strange vanguard of European civilization and political ideas. From this vantage-point one can see with a field-glass to the south the mountains surrounding Fez, with the summit of Zalagh that is shaped like the back of a monstrous fish, and to the north the ranges of the Rif, rising one behind the other.

Major Richard, the commandant of this section, and his senior assistant, Lieutenant de Seroux, welcomed me, as we drove up. The commandant was in a strange uni-



form—a loose blouse and trousers like those of a Cossack, a cap with a broad vizor and a protecting piece of cloth for the back of the neck, heavy, hobnailed shoes and short leather gaiters, all of which indicated a life of hard work and difficulties, well confirmed by the deep lines about his mouth and on his forehead. If I were to paint a soldier of the valorous, immortal guard of Napoleon, the one, for instance, who was the genii of the glory of his great father at the side of the weak Duke of Reichstadt, I should beg Major Richard to pose for me. It would be difficult to find a better model for Rostand's heroic figure.

His senior assistant, Lieutenant de Seroux, an officer of the General Staff, was of another and quite modern type. Young, of an aristocratic family, nervous and well educated, he understood thoroughly and was full of enthusiasm for the European mission among the more backward peoples. Two other officers were present, Lieutenants Mourre and Taoudi, the latter an Arab who had graduated from a school of high standing for native officers in Meknes.

During the excellent luncheon which had been prepared against my arrival these officers told me that the detachment defending this section from the attacks of the Arab gangs of the Rif was composed of only two hundred soldiers, the greater number of whom were from the Shlu tribe of the upper Atlas region, and had merely a handful of French officers and sergeants to direct them. Lieutenant de Seroux at one point remarked:

"You see that our life is primitive and difficult in such a place, but the results are good. We have convinced all

the population of our section that we did not come here to exploit them, to conquer or to do them any harm, but only to give effect to the terms of the accord with the sultan, to insure peace to the whole countryside, to further its economic development and to promote that culture without which no man and no nation can today live and develop. We have to repulse, just as we did last night, for instance, the attacks of Abd el-Krim, who sends out raiding parties for the food which is so scarce in the mountains of the Rif; we make roads that assure the movement of trucks, purchase from the natives what they produce, export it and bring back to them the goods they need. We have built a warehouse, which the natives administer themselves; we have organized a hospital in which six hundred of them can ask for aid; we have proved to the Berbers that peace is the only sound basis of lasting welfare and, when we had ample proof that our seed had fallen upon good ground, we armed considerable groups of men in the neighborhood, who can now defend their villages and property from the raiding gangs that come out of the mountains. Look out there, for instance. Those three Shlu horsemen are packing ammunition for the inhabitants of the two villages further out, where another raid is momentarily expected."

After luncheon we visited the observation-post on a neighboring height and had from there an extended view along a great part of the Riffian front. Lieutenant de Seroux showed me through his field-glasses the mountains where the principal forces of Abd el-Krim were for the moment gathered. In the discussions with these offi-

cers I sensed considerable inquietude in the face of coming events.

"We do not want war," they said, "but Abd el-Krim cannot be allowed to run off food from the territory of the sultan of Morocco for the maintenance of his army; and, as the war with the Spanish is bound to be protracted, he will be obliged, after the supplies in the Rif are exhausted, to make repeated raids upon the peaceful inhabitants of this country to revictual his army, and he may even force the tribesmen here into service against the Spaniards. If this happens, we shall be drawn into more formidable conflict with him."

Thus spoke the French officers, but I had other thoughts on the matter. Regardless of whether the operations of the rebel chief should prove successful or not, his invasion of the zone of French influence seemed to me to be inevitable. I had heard in Fez the confidences of the Kairween mullah and the words of the man in the black bournous; I had felt the unrest in the attitude of the crowd in the Medina; I knew the Bolshevik system, the system of these destroyers of the peace of the world, and I knew that Abd el-Krim would be exploited by them to the utmost. They would urge him to attack Fez el-Bali and help him to take this town of Idris; they would play at a Holy War and would make of this adventurer a new Mahdi. Only concerted action by the French, Spanish, Italian and English can paralyze this plan, the success of which would tend to ruin the whole of the civilizing work of the white race not only in North Africa but throughout other parts of the continent.

However, it were well if the nations would come to an understanding with regard to the colonization of the Dark Continent; and it would be well, too, if they did not interfere with and hinder one another, a fact which, as an accidental observer, I noticed in innumerable places. This is the weak feature in the European influence of the present day everywhere outside the limits of our own continent. It were well also, in this connection, to ponder over the future of a Europe betrayed by one hundred thirty million Russians, who were until recently looked upon as Europeans but who now, under the influence and leadership of the Red Terror, have been transformed into renegades and enemies of the West.

After a short and delightful partridge-hunt with Major Richard, I took leave of these interesting men in this unusual setting and was back in Fez at ten o'clock, white as a miller with the fine dust of the road, but extremely impressed and pleased with my day at the outpost before the lines of Abd el-Krim.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE LAST DAY IN THE CITY OF IDRIS

**B**Y the time we were ready to move on from Fez to the coast section of Morocco we knew the town rather well; yet, before going, we wished to have one last general view of the city and its surrounding fields and orchards. Consequently we took a carriage and drove out along the road that encircles the city wall and from that on up into the hills through orchards and thickets of aloes and Berber figs.

As we wound out at one point from behind the protecting screen of trees, the town suddenly appeared below us, golden in the rays of the late afternoon sun and dotted with the red roofs of the numerous guard towers and the emerald spots of gardens and trees. In the low distance the city seemed unreal with nothing of its life visible and no sound coming from its streets. It appeared as an inanimate element in some bit of scenery, the fancy of a painter enchanted by the charm of the East. We remained silent and only gazed, listening to the whispers of centuries coming up to us from the minarets of Mulay Idris, Kairween and Bu 'Anania, from the crenelated walls and from the tombs of the Merinides.

As the way carried us on between pretty gardens and

woods, we found ourselves approaching a group of native buildings, near one of the doors of which a serious-looking old Arab with a long black beard falling over his snow-white bournous was seated in the midst of a crowd counting old men of the village, rich and poor, women shrouded in bournouses and *haiks*, *tholba*, village youths and even *meskins*. The whole group stood almost motionless and silent, listening to what this traveling bard was recounting. Undisturbed by our approach, he continued his recitation in a well-trained, attractive voice that knew its power. Hafid translated for us the tale, just as it came from the lips of the old Arab.

“Great is Allah, and Mahomet, his Prophet, is also great. But there have been other prophets chosen by the Lord, and powers have been given unto them equal to that of Allah himself. Such an one was Joshua, the son of Nun, a giant so tall that he could not have entered the mosque. It was he who set the mountains where they were needed. Such an one also was Mulay Abd el-Selam, who helped Allah construct the world and who was the originator of faith in the One God. Another was Ali Amhauch, as powerful as the Prophet. And also there was the ‘hidden Imam,’ Abd Allah, bone of the bone and blood of the blood of the Prophet Mahomet. Such chosen ones exist in every age to announce the will of Allah and to point to the coming of the hour. Their eyes search the souls of men, their words reach the innermost chambers of the heart and their thoughts compel action. They appear suddenly, unannounced, and unknown before the moment of their manifestation to the people. They pass through the years of mortal life, bringing and

leaving imperishable results for the joy of the Faithful and the discomfiture of the unbeliever.

"In the north there appeared one of these Chosen of God, and the echoes of his deeds reverberate throughout the world like peals of thunder. In the East there appeared another, who came to judge good and evil deeds in the name of Allah and was the forerunner of the Saviour of the Faithful. Look round with the eyes of your soul, listen with the ears of your heart and watch that ye miss not the hour of the Messenger's coming!"

Hafid thus explained the words of the bard and said that this was the usual parable, following which would come the real tale, generally an historical legend concerning some ancient master, hero or famed *wali*. In spite of Hafid's prediction, I felt that this parable was probably meant to bear upon the developments in North Africa, in the Rif, in Egypt and farther eastward on the continent of Asia. The words of the old Arab with the grave, inspired countenance and the clever, compelling eyes appealed to me as covert, symbolical propaganda for Abd el-Krim in arousing Islam to action.

As we continued on up the hill, Fez disclosed itself from a different angle, all pink, warm and mild under the less insistent and more genial rays of the sun, just about to lave itself after the scorching day in the cooling bath of night. My thoughts traveled down to the mosques and the *medersas* where lay hidden the soul of Islam.

But it must not be inferred that Islam is motionless or sleeping. It believes in Fate and is, therefore, at once silent, patient, calm and severe; but, when the hour shall strike, when the Faithful are told by inspired interpreters

from the north or east that Fate demands action, this patience, calm and seeming tolerance will disappear as a morning mist before the burning sun of their flaming faith and only the severity of Islam will remain. And these messengers who are to point out and explain have already come—I have seen them in the whirlpool of revolution in Persia and Turkey, in the Moslem movement in Afghanistan. The great World War, the colonial policies of white peoples and the downfall of their power and spell over the colored races have furnished a new watchword for the coming of the hour.

Islam has not the characteristics of evolution in its soul, but manifests itself in a series of revolutionary bounds. Uniformity of thought has formed and held tightly together a large and strong organization, added to which piety maintains the impulse and contributes the element of persisting endurance. And the Moslems tenaciously persist not only morally but physically since, as nomads and small agriculturalists, always hardened by training for fighting, they have restricted and simple wants. They came to North Africa from the more barren plains of Asia, found here easier conditions of life and now ask nothing better than the chance to defend these possessions which they have acquired after persistent struggle and great effort. They love their country, this earth here burned by the sun, cracking and stony, there beside some well or watercourse drawing over itself a bright mantle of flowers and grass—they love it, because they bought it with their blood, because it nourishes them, because it has developed Islamic leaders, scholars and saints and is now hallowed by their ashes.



Islam has not been dead; it has not even been sleeping, but has simply been silent and waiting. Now it is no longer silent and in some places will not even wait. The hour calling to action has come.

While I was formulating these thoughts, the sun disappeared behind the mountains, and Fez seemed for a moment to have been extinguished. It lay there gray and threatening, held tight between its binding walls. This was my last strong impression of the city of Idris. It was as if an invisible genie, or perhaps some ordinary Moroccan djinn, had chosen thus picturesquely to reveal to me the color and the sentiments of the soul of Maghreb.

During my months in North Africa this soul of Maghreb attracted me much more strongly than the inner life of either Algeria or Tunisia, because of its primitiveness, because of the greater barbarity and severity of its followers of Islam, because of the greater purity of the remnants of ancient native cults and because of its elemental sentiments and tendencies. Inspired by this interest I took advantage of ever-continuing opportunities to talk exhaustively with Arabs, Berbers, Kabyles and other natives and drew out from these contacts not only the superficial and everyday thoughts, but those that were ordinarily hidden, passionate and deep, like the interiors of their sacred temples, guarded from the entrance of an unbeliever by the law of *horm*. Often one word, one unfinished phrase, was enough to make a dark matter clear and to clothe an apparently clear one in a shroud of mystery. Years of travel among peoples in all stages of life and development have given me some ability to see into the human soul and an intuition in searching out and

touching the sensitive and, very often, the more disturbing features of the inner life. Often a single word or question, even though made through the unsatisfactory medium of an interpreter, may induce the other to unveil the more secret chambers of the soul, to indulge in an outburst of violent, elemental sincerity in some complaint, trouble, hate or hope; and then the dark and twisted things become clear and straight. After these many contacts a synthesis of impressions, of logical and sentimental deductions was built up.

In the initial study and understanding of the soul of Maghreb I was greatly helped by the knowledge of Islam which I had gained in Russia, Turkey, Turkestan, the Khirgiz steppes, Khorasan, Persia and even among the strange, mixed cult of the Prophet in China. After all, Islam is everywhere Islam, and the general trend of the thoughts of colored men has given it a greater uniformity in its static, than in its dynamic, expression. And it is these facts and experiences which give me the boldness to speak of the soul of North Africa.

What then was the last impression of this Fez which I have so often referred to as the heart and mind of Maghreb? The figure shifts as I reflect, for I look upon it as a great smithy, where steel is being wrought and shaped for a yet unknown use. Will this steel be turned out as plough and engine to co-operate with the men of Europe in the subjugation of Nature or will it be shaped into curved scimitars with which to fight the invader? Only Allah knows—Allah, who in the hidden tablets of the Book of Fate has written His final decrees.

But back on the mountainside that evening after the

sun had entered the sea-guarded doors of its fairy palace in the west, a flute played somewhere, a drum was heard and the high wailing of a late meuzzin reached our ears:

*"La Illah Illah Allah! Allah Akbar . . ."*

A night-bird whimpered, wild pigeons and thrushes gave their evening calls and the locusts began their never-ending rasp.

## CHAPTER XIV

### OLYMPUS AND THE SONS OF THE PROPHET

THE next day at sunrise, the hour of the matinal prayer, there drew up before the door of our hotel the car that was to carry us westward to the sea through unknown scenes and country that beckoned us on with a luring hand. All the way to the first affluent of the Sbu River we ran through a well-tilled agricultural country, with the exception of a single stretch of stony desert, where we found little life save locusts and scorpions. Of these latter we identified two varieties, the first great, black fellows with yellow legs and small pincers, *Androctonus bicolor*, and the second, smaller, yellow-colored ones, *Buthus occitanicus*.

After having crossed this dreary desert, which Zofiette named "The Hopeless Plain," we began ascending again into high ranges of hills till we reached once more the fertile fields and vineyards. As we climbed, we saw to the left of the road something that resembled a group of ruined walls but that turned out to be only pinkish-gray rocks, all notched and broken. The hunter's instinct whispered subconsciously that among these heaps of stone and weather-cleft rocks jackals might be hiding—an instinct that proved itself quite correct, for, as our car

honked to an Arab on a mule ahead, from behind a jagged stone the form of one of these beasts of prey flashed for a moment and made off for safety.

*"Dib, dib!"* shouted the Arab at the top of his voice.

After topping this particular rise and leaving Arab and jackal in possession, we saw a little farther down a group of picturesque white buildings set among the ever-welcome trees. The chauffeur drew up in their shadow and turned to say:

"The ruins of Volubilis."

We bundled out with the intention of paying a visit to Monsieur L. Chatelain, who is the director of the archaeological work in the place, but found that he was away and had, therefore, to content ourselves with taking an Arab guide to show us through the ruins. Having read many books about Roman Africa and Volubilis in particular, I was most keen to see with my own eyes some of the vestiges of that exceptional civilization.

The Arabs believe these to be the remains of a city left by the Egyptians and call it "Ksar Faraun," or "the city of the Pharaohs." As a matter of fact, Volubilis was one of the most advanced western military and commercial outposts of the Romans and is mentioned by Pliny the Elder, Ptolemy, Pomponius Mela and other writers who described Mauretania Tingitana, as they called this western country. French authorities assert that the Roman legions came here to help defend the frontiers of the immense Empire. Tangier was the principal Roman military base in Morocco, and Volubilis almost the last post toward that vast, outlying south from which hordes of warlike Berbers swarmed off from time to time.

Why did the Romans come here? What did they take from this country? From Mauretania in general they exported to Rome grain, oil, some of the dearer qualities of timber, grapes, horses, donkeys and woolen yarn, from which latter were manufactured the well-known *stragula maura*, or Berber carpets, which were to the Roman world what Persian carpets are to that of the present. But some days later a native merchant in Meknes, who spoke fluent French, added the following interesting bit:

"The Romans found in Volubilis something much more prized than goods. Not far from the site is the mountainous range of Zerhun, whose forests, ravines, caverns and herds of mountain goats and sheep attracted innumerable ferocious beasts—lions, panthers, leopards, hyenas and jackals. Hunts were arranged, and great traps set for capturing alive these rulers of the forest, and, once they had forfeited their liberty for the narrow limits of a cage, they were sent to Rome and to other cities, whose crowds demanded the bloody shows of the arena. Echoes of this still persist in the tales of our bards."

Mauretania Tingitana thus provided the surfeited mob of decaying Rome with their "*panem et circenses*." And it furnished yet another cherished contribution to the life of the capital of the Caesars—black and brown slaves. Those among them who were handsome enough in appearance and build were entered in the gladiatorial schools and given a chance to fight for their lives on other sands, those of the arena, while most of the remaining ones were used in the foreign legions. They were courageous, hardy and warlike and are represented on the

Column of Trajan in light tunics, with lance and shield and mounted on small, fleet horses, charging the enemy.

As our Arab guide preceded us across a small ravine and along a narrow path that led to the nearest excavations, a flock of partridges rose from the bushes at our side and a hare crossed the path. Green and pink lizards scuttled over the marble slabs that were cut and placed by slaves seventeen centuries ago. In crevices of the flagstones and in cracks of the earth spiders and scolopendras waited for booty. One of them had attacked a great beetle in a green, shining armor, resembling the sacred Egyptian scarab, had killed it with its poison and was busy dragging it off to its hole.

We soon came to the walls of the town and found that the only remnants of them were scattered blocks of stone and the foundations of the round watch-towers and of some of the gates that led out of this distant Roman fortress on African soil. We entered this city, whose every bit of stone, every bit of pavement, every column had seen the symbol of "eternal" Rome. Involuntarily we felt a strange respect for this dead city, where, immortalized in these stones, lived the great spirit of the powerful nation that spread to the most distant corners of the world of those days rays of the civilization of all the peoples that went to make up the Empire. Today the strong lines of the triumphal arch erected to glorify Emperor Caracalla, the columns of the forum, ruins of the basilica—all places where the public life of the city once seethed—stand somber against the background of the brilliant sky. Also motionless and indifferent to the blaze of the sun's rays lay the treads of splendid staircases, the

columns and lintels of private houses, the jars for keeping oil, the stone baths, the fragments of mosaics and tablets bearing Roman inscriptions—all memorials to a life of long ago.

From certain of the inscriptions which Time and the hands of men have left unspoiled, the archaeologists have learned that Volubilis once boasted an ancient and respected family of the Caecilia gens; that once the decemvir, Marc Valerian Severus, a Carthaginian by extraction who became a high Roman dignitary, served here with glory and had a statue erected to him in the forum, in recognition of his success in obtaining from Emperor Claudius Roman privileges for the town, as well as the acknowledgment of the legality of the marriages of Roman citizens with foreigners, even though they might be barbarians. Evidently the women of these neighboring Berber tribes were far from unbeautiful, as the love affairs of the Roman warriors in Mauretania reached the ears of the divine Emperor in Rome and were one of the reasons for the ultimate downfall of the Empire.

This contact of Rome at Volubilis with the life of Africa had, in a way, some curious results, as it led to a unique admixture of the Roman religious beliefs and ceremonies with the ancient cults of Africa. The wife of Severus, Fabia Bera, came from a neighboring Berber tribe and achieved to the position of the first priestess of the town; while another priestess of note was a slave from Gallia, who had been born in Vindabone, or Vienna, and was the wife of Maternus, the chief of a regiment composed of Iberians from Galicia and Asturia. These



priestesses, *flaminae*, were oracle-givers and at times even made decisions in the most important lawsuits.

The Arabs and Berbers had always many such prophetesses, called *kahinas*, who had unlimited influence upon the life of their tribes and often extended their power over several neighboring clans. When the false prophet, Mosa Ilama, appeared after the death of Mahomet, one of the most famous among these *kahinas*, a certain Sidjah, gathered together the Arab tribes and fought him in battle but, after some years of strife, patched up an understanding with him and signed a final truce by marrying him. Another among them, *Kahina* Zeineb, after previous marriages, finally became the wife of the magnificent Yusuf ibn Teshufin, the founder of the Almora-vid dynasty in Morocco, and has been immortalized in legend under the title of *Sahira*, meaning a woman wonder-worker. Later when I was in the town of Zerhun and asked a mullah about a certain Roman priestess, he answered that she was a *kahina* of great power and had foretold the destruction of the Roman fortresses in Africa and the years of plague. The gods of the Roman Olympus, with Jupiter at their head, here mingled with those of the cults of Isis and Mithra and with African demonology.

The ruins of this strange town lay there before us, bathed in the ever-present and all-penetrating rays of the African sun and covered with thick vegetation. Except for the whisper of romance and story that floated in upon our minds from these long-abandoned streets and portals, silence reigned here, the silence of the grave—and really

it was a cemetery of that ancient Roman culture which had assimilated the thought, the arts and the imagination of the whole known world. Bronze statues of a barking dog, of Hercules, Neptune, Mercury and Isis, together with fragments of marble statues, coins, lamps, *amphorae*, jewels and mosaics were excavated from this cemetery and placed in the museum; but these objects, set up in a modern European building with catalogue numbers and labels, live no more and whisper no more to the musing traveler, as do the stones, the tablets and the columns of the ancient buildings left in their original settings.

And for what do these whisperings seek a sympathetic ear? Of what would they tell us? From far back in the canyon of Time, as ever-diminishing reverberations along the walls of the centuries, come down to us the quavering notes of military trumpets, the bustle and hum of the forum to which the mixed cohorts with their scores of tongues are returning after a victory over Edemon, the Moorish chieftain who has dared to defy Imperial Rome. Like the sounds of a distant storm one hears the cries of the soldiery and the populace, hailing Septimius Severus on his arrival at Volubilis, followed by the lower and calmer tones of the well-known prefect of the respected Caecilia gens, eloquently welcoming the noted dignitary. Is it the wind murmuring through the dry grass and the shrubs or is it the thousand-throated question of the crowd to the decemvir whom they have awaited as the messenger of the divine Claudius to announce to them whether he has acceded to their petition that their olive-skinned, brown and even black beloved ones be acknowl-

edged as Roman citizens with all the privileges that this exalted station carried with it in those days?

This Volubilis, where Moors, Iberians, Gauls, Germans, Franks and Britons fought for the furtherance of Rome's political aspirations, has almost completely disappeared under the wind-borne mantle of the desert, and now these same Franks, Moors, Iberians and Germans are working to excavate and reconstruct it. German war-prisoners have carried through the most difficult and important part of the task, for which intelligent and conscientious work were required, under the direction of Monsieur Louis Chatelain, a French officer who had been wounded during service on the German front. Spaniards have worked here, and Berbers of the ancient Mauretania Tingitana are still excavating. Is it not a proof that Europe, rent by political strife, can find common aims and comprehensible bases for co-operation the moment it steps from the realm of politics into those of knowledge and art?

"What became of Volubilis? Why was the town destroyed?" I asked our Arab guide.

"When Meknes, Zerhun and Rabat were constructed, the Morocco sultans took from here columns, cornices and whole façades, for it was all good building material."

This was not the reply to my question, as the Arab explained only the last stage in the town's destruction. But history tells us that, after the downfall of Rome from its inability to consolidate and hold together its immense Empire, the Vandals appeared here, those arch-iconoclasts and despoilers. Then came Byzantium, whose interests did not reach to this frontier and who conse-

quently left Volubilis to its fate of solitude and such further depredation as man might lay upon it. On their march of conquest toward the Atlantic the Asiatic and Arab soldiers of the Prophet came upon it and destroyed what little remained of the statues of men and animals in obedience to the prohibition of the Koran against the material representation of living forms. It was then that the Berber dynasties completed the work of ruin by taking the building materials to construct and ornament their palaces and temples.

We had no more than turned our backs upon the ruins of Volubilis before we found ourselves beneath the summit of a fairly high mountain spur, crowned by a minaret with shining, green tiles. Only two miles separate the old Roman city and this holy Moorish town of El-Zerhun, which helped to despoil the outpost of the Caesars for its own adornment. It is the first stage for the pilgrims of western Maghreb in the journey to Mecca, for a faithful *hadj* must visit it seven times before starting on the longer road to the sacred city on the Red Sea. It is here next to the splendid mosque that is located the tomb of the greatest saint of Morocco, Mulay Idris el-Akbar, a direct descendant of the Prophet through his daughter and the originator of the Arab dynasty of the Idrisides, whose son, Mulay Idris II, was the founder of Fez.

El-Zerhun is encircled by a powerful wall with massive gates, supplemented at a little distance with a second enclosing defensive circle of Berber figs, so rank and thick as to be practically impenetrable by man. We left our car and began scrambling up steep, broken lanes, or rather paths among the rocks, with the idea of reaching a

summit that would give us a view down upon the whole town. Picking our way up over stones that had been smoothed and polished by the tread of thousands of pilgrims visiting the *zaouia* of Idris, we were rewarded at the top by finding the whole town at our feet, with its terraces of roofs and the minaret shining like an emerald among them.

A young native, appearing, as it were, right out of the earth itself, and saluting us politely, addressed us in excellent French. It developed that he was a son of one of the noble families of the town and that he had communicated to our chauffeur, who had made much better time to the summit, his dream that one day he might meet a writer from some foreign land who would poetically describe his native city for the outside world. In response our driver had told him that "a writer" was just then blowing and puffing his way up the steep side of the spur to see the unusually located town from this vantage-point.

I promised the young patriot to "describe poetically" his city as best my powers might permit; and now, as I reflect over the task he has set me, I have decided that I shall come closest to meeting his wishes, if I record what the young Arab himself told me and in his own style.

"Merciful Allah be praised! He, the Great and Compassionate, brought glory to this place. Twelve centuries ago on these two summits were two Berber villages, which fought each other in the saddle in merciless vendetta between the two points and looked upon each other as eternal enemies. Once an unknown wanderer came to these villages and, in response to the questions as to whence he had come, he pointed to the east and said:

"I am come from the country where the great Prophet proclaimed the faith in One God and gathered all of the power over the Faithful into his own hands. The name of Mahomet be praised throughout the whole earth! I am the bone of his bone and my blood is the blood of his veins. Power and rule belong to me, but the false caliph, Harun al-Rashid, by deceit robbed me of them and sought to kill me. Twice already have men harvested the grain from their fields since I began my journey to your mountains.'

"'Whom are you seeking here?' asked one of the villagers.

"I had a vision in Hejaz that in the place where an old city and two villages form a triangle and where these latter are at war with each other I should find a man, called Aouraba, who would help me and, through this, would himself become great and famous.'

"'No such *man* exists here,' answered the Berbers. 'That is the name of a tribe of traitorous dogs, of cowardly and vicious jackals!'

"'Each tribe has a head and a heart, and these are its chief,' rejoined the traveler.

"'The chief of these criminals is one called Gamderoui,' said the villagers.

"'Thank you; may Allah be merciful to you and increase the crop of your vineyards.'

"The courageous and really good Gamderoui was just in the act of putting his foot in the stirrup to start on a hunt when this unknown wanderer, coming from these warring villages of Kliber and Tasga, approached him and announced:

“I am he whom you saw yesterday, as you stopped at the well. My name is Mulay Idris Abd Allah ben el-Hassan ben Ali, and the blood of the Prophet flows in my veins. I have come to seek you, Gamderoui, and you are to act as the Lord shall order you.’

“Bowling to the will of Allah, Gamderoui and the Aouraba tribe received the banished caliph, who at once began to teach the Koran to pagans, Christians and Jews. Then he reconciled the fighting tribes, united them and formed the Maghreb Empire, ascending the throne as its first great emir. The thankful sultan married a Berber woman, who gave to him a son, the great and holy Idris who built Fez el-Bali. Here in Ulili, the ancient Volubilis, the hand of the revengeful Harun al-Rashid reached the sultan and had him poisoned by a sorcerer.

“Oh, foreigners! Look down upon this city, where the people entombed the ashes of the master. Here the unbeliever cannot remain longer than from sunrise to sunset. The Idrises were wise masters, who taught the faith in One God, the Creator of everything and of all the other gods and spirits. They have all remained here—the ancient gods, the saints of the neighboring tribes and the djinns—and find place enough within the walls of El-Zerhun. At the hours of prayer to Allah they hide in their several abodes and only come out of them when the last words of the Imams and the muezzins have died away. The most celebrated magi, sorcerers, fortune-tellers, and clairvoyants have visited our town and have found strength here. Here they have put together the most efficacious talismans, just as they have also uttered the most reliable prophecies. Old men among our people

have received and guarded the most proven magic recipes to cure the sick, and here poets come to write their tomes of verse."

For a long time the young Berber held our attention with innumerable stories of the place, as he guided us about through the town, where we noticed a Koran school with some of the Roman columns from Volubilis incorporated in its walls, were shown a fountain with miraculous healing powers and were led through the market and through dark, mysterious passageways under the houses.

At last we yielded to the insistent honkings from our chauffeur, who was signaling us from below that we must be away, if we would reach Meknes that evening. Consequently we scrambled down to the road and were soon again on our westward way. Before the jutting shoulders of the range moved out to cut off our view, we took one last look at this strange town perched upon this mountain ridge with its white walls standing out clear above the gray-green of the slope and jealously guarding its disorderly grouped buildings and minaret, which looked like a great spear thrust upward into the warm blue of the sky. El-Zerhun disappeared just as Ksar Faraun, or the Roman Volubilis, had previously melted away. The voices of Jupiter and of the descendant of Mahomet were hushed. One heard no longer the whisperings of the forum and of the unknown pagan gods, even the names of whom had long been forgotten through the disappearance of the tribes that worshipped them. However, they have in spirit persisted and maintained their influence and importance through the devotion and



help of their sorceresses, these *kahinas* whose sisters of long ago were beloved by the Roman dignitaries.

All this disappeared behind the mountains, yet the vivid impression remained and gave birth to fecund thoughts. The story of the young Arab had laid bare for me some of the workings of the native mind in its attitude toward the primitive gods and spirits that still retained their dominion over the minds of peasant and sage alike. If the soul of the people is so guided, how dangerous would be the liberty that men seek to bring to them! What would these tribes do except indulge in a whirlpool of civil strife? When years of bad harvest, of cattle epidemics or of disease come upon them, would their sorcerers and clairvoyants help them, would their quacks and magi heal them?

I am firmly convinced that the liberty and freedom for these tribes ought to be of another character from that about which agitators are preaching; otherwise to the ruins of Volubilis, Blida and Timgad we may soon be obliged to add El-Zerhun, Fez, Rabat, Biskra and hundreds of other towns and villages that would be engulfed by the storm, carried away by the natural desire for an independence for which they are not prepared and for which, as their history points out, they are not temperamentally fitted. 5

## CHAPTER XV

### IN THE CITY OF THE BLACK TYRANT

WHILE we chatted over this absorbing question, our car ran through a rich agricultural country with unbroken olive-orchards, cultivated fields, vineyards and fruit-trees flanking the road. There was only one other district that I had up to this time seen with which I could compare this countryside, and that was Bel Abbes in western Algeria. I had read that the ancient Berber tribe of the Meknassa had, for some unrecorded reason, separated into two parts, one locating east of Fez and founding the town of Tasa, while the other trekked west of the capital and laid the foundations of Meknassa ez-Zitun, which is "Meknes among the olives." It would be difficult to find a more appropriate name for this place, for, as it thrust itself into the landscape at a distance of six miles, it gave the impression of being located on a mountain with the gently sloping sides entirely covered by a dark forest of olive-trees. At this distance Meknes presented quite a different picture from the other Moroccan towns we had seen, in as much as these were pressed and crowded into square walls, while Meknes stretched out in an extended line along the horizon and gave us, as we gazed upon it at this distance, the impression of a gigantic crenelated wall with its seven minarets standing out like

watch-towers against the orange-red background of the evening sky.

Meknes is really the center of a plateau, some fifteen hundred feet above the level of the sea, and is partially surrounded by the northern range of the Middle Atlas and by the complementing ranges of Nador, Zerhun and Tselfat, with the rivers Fekrana and Rdom crossing the plateau in deep ravines. It was on the left bank of the first of these that the early Meknassa leaders traced the outlines of the town, but it was the bloody tyrant, Mulay Ismail, who gave to it its present appearance.

On the day of our arrival we were invited to dine with the civil administrator and virtual controller of French policies in the whole of the Sultan's possessions, Monsieur Maurice Halmagrand. During this and many other delightful evenings that we spent with Monsieur and Madame Halmagrand we met other members of the French administrative staff and gathered much valuable information that greatly assisted me in my later observations and studies, as our host was not only scrupulously conscientious in the performance of his official duties but was also a close and highly trained student of the country and the people.

In our many visits to all parts of the town under the able guidance of a Polish member of the Foreign Legion we found little in its buildings and general life to distinguish it from Fez and other Moroccan cities, until our long-resident cicerone pointed out to us that Meknes possesses a unique feature in the character of its population by reason of the fact that it is located at the intersection of two great routes, the one from Fez to the Atlantic and

the other from the heart of the Middle Atlas to the ranges of the Rif. This latter is a strategic and commercial route, along which many tribes have flowed northward in search of more congenial surroundings and an easier life.

"Look at this crowd—one that you will never find in other towns except, perhaps, on pilgrimage days or at the feast of Bairam. It counts representatives from almost every tribe living on the Beni Mtir plain or in the mountains near it. I shall point out to you men from the tribes of Gerwan, Zaian, Mjat, Beni Mgild and even those from the neighborhood of Ujda."

It was also here at Meknes at the end of the seventeenth century that the unusual religious teacher, Ben Aïssa, or "the son of Jesus," promulgated a new doctrine, chiefly among the poor and oppressed. He worked among the lowest elements of the population and became so powerful that men defied even the authority of the bloody sultan when sure of his support. He united and organized Berbers and slaves, forming a great confraternity, somewhat wild in its traditions but bound together by the oath of absolute obedience to the supreme head of the organization. He was finally acknowledged as a saint by Sultan Mulay Ismail, and his tomb was erected in the cemetery opposite the gate, Bab Jdid, to become the object of worship and pilgrimage which has brought many of his followers to the city among the olives.

His Sultan master, Mulay Ismail, the founder of the Alawite dynasty, which still rules in Morocco, was no ordinary man. Though he was a tyrant, bloody, cruel and admittedly courageous, and a despot such as the

Maghreb Empire had not previously known, one must give him the credit for having been a keen psychologist and the first ruler to understand thoroughly the soul of the people over whom he was set to reign.

The Berbers in their various tribes have become a conglomerate of the characteristics of all the nations which have in turn conquered and exploited them. Several authorities, in summing up their traits, point out that continued subjugation and calamities have operated to form an ethnic and moral type that is far from ideal. In general they are an anarchistic, quarrelsome people, unable to govern themselves, vindictive and traitorous. Musa, the Saracenic viceroy of Egypt who conquered Spain in 711 to 713, thus characterized the Berbers to the caliph on his return to Stamboul:

"They are the most treacherous men in the whole world. There is nothing sacred for them in their promises or their given word."

When Mulay Ismail, having formed the intention of uniting and organizing the empire, sought some means which would serve to nullify or diminish the anarchism of the Berbers, he found Ben Aissa ready at hand as a tool to work upon and shape the sentiments of the most turbulent layers of the proletariat. It seems clear to me that a silent but definite understanding existed between the prophet and the tyrant. Finding Meknes a great book, filled with a mixture of true and false tales about the bloody sultan and his prophet, I made a careful historical and psychological analysis of these two totally different personalities, as I wanted to know with whom I had to deal in this Berber capital.

The character of Ismail is almost self-evident, when one visits the works of his hand. It was in 1673 that he ascended the throne of Maghreb and moved his capital from Fez to Meknes, which attracted him not only because of its strategic position, its olive-groves, pure air and "healthy water," but also because of his own desire to quit Fez with its network of intrigue in favor of the supplanted Merinides, who had brought such glory to the city of Idris II. The shadow of Mulay Ismail is to be met everywhere in Meknes the moment one enters the gate of Bab Mansur el-Aleuj and is surrounded by the high, massive walls of lime and beaten earth. This is not a single enceinte but an apparently never-ending series of walls, surrounding old palaces, mosques, pavilions, harems and gardens. The sweat and blood of almost sixty thousand Christian prisoners and slaves and of many tens of thousands of other workers, driven in here from the different tribes to help execute the plans of the Sultan, were the cement which consolidated the work of Mulay Ismail and at the same time were the venom which was to destroy it.

Mulay Ismail himself personally superintended the work of construction and was everywhere followed by a giant from the Sudan, who carried a sword, a rifle, a poignard and a great whip. The smallest fault or mistake, or even sometimes just a caprice of Ismail, blotted out the life of a worker or brought down upon his body the blows of the stinging lash. The Christian slaves who were ransomed, the monks and the foreign ambassadors, such as Cavelier, Moutte, Jourdan and Stewart, have left many records in their memoirs, testifying to the unim-

aginate cruelties of this black sultan with the white spot on his cheek and the flowing, gray beard. He was an extraordinary and somewhat terrible man with strong chameleon-like characteristics, knowing not only how to give the impression of being magnificent, liberal, considerate and even at times ashamed when in reality he was revengeful, miserly, severe, relentless and madly bold, but even changing the color of his face, which in moments of happiness became almost white and showed blue eyes, in contrast to which in moments of passion it was nearly black and was set with bloodshot eyes.

Some tribes even preserve in their proverbs and common sayings the memory of these particular characteristics of the terrible master, as for instance:

"Yesterday the sky was as bright as the face of Sidi Mulay Ismail but today it has been covered by a cloud as dark as the face of the sultan when anger flamed in his heart and drove the blood to his eyes."

Such was the man who left behind him this large quarter of the city with its surrounding belts of innumerable walls, where I wandered through the labyrinth of passages around his palaces, examined his hundreds of buildings, jostling one another in disorder, and strolled along the seemingly endless galleries where the miserly ruler stored the tribute of grain, dates, figs and fruit that was brought him by the conquered tribes and where he stabled his two thousand or more of mules and donkeys.

This man of contradictions right up to the time of his old age sprang lightly into the saddle, with one stroke of his sword cut off the heads of enemies and slaves, had

five hundred sons, ate ever alone, seated on a sheepskin, drank water only, led a more severe life than that of most of the learned *ulema*, went barefoot and without a turban, taught his people the laws of Allah and of the Prophet and ruined Berbers and Jews whom he compelled not only to pay the ordinary taxes but to give of their wealth to maintain the whole court and to provide funds for the construction work which he never permitted to be interrupted. However heavy may have been his hand, he succeeded in uniting all the tribes from the Atlas and the Atlantic to Tlemsen and Biskra and established peace, law and security throughout the whole of Maghreb. It was only he himself and his black praetorian guard that offered the exception to this rule of security and law, for he violated every established right and statute by his continual spoliation and persecution of the tribes and families suspected of treachery or discontent. One of his well-known sayings seems strikingly characteristic:

“My state is a bag filled with rats. If I were to cease shaking the bag, the rats would gnaw holes and jump out of it.”

With this as his code Ismail surrounded himself with Arab tribes, maintaining an army of Negroes and kept his state in continual ferment and movement through the instrumentality of wars, the transplanting of tribes from one locality to another, punitive expeditions and the construction of buildings, walls and gardens, only to destroy them and begin the work anew.

It is recorded that twice only did this ruler of such severity toward himself and toward others give utter-



ance to words of praise. The first was on the occasion of showing to a foreigner the splendid pavilion under which his sarcophagus was ultimately to be suspended on chains, when he spoke warmly of the work of his architect-builder; and the second when he despatched his grand vizier, Ben Aisha, to the magnificent Louis XIV to ask the hand of his daughter, the beautiful Princess Conti, in marriage. It may be that the royal child of France did not care to accept the hand of a ruler who had, according to the authority of Busnot, the monk, a harem of five hundred wives. Incidentally, the principal and most powerful figure among all these royal consorts was Lalla Aisha, a dominating Negro woman who had been a former slave of Sultan Er-Rashid. A descendant of one of the collateral branches of the family of Mulay Ismail, whom I met while wandering through the ruins of the sultan's palaces, told me that this warlike and cruel giantess protected the interests of the blacks and induced her royal husband to gather about him the Negro guard, through which she later dominated him by her ability to incite the soldiers to revolt, if she so willed. The second in the favor of the ruler was Lalla Aziza, an Englishwoman who had been made a slave, had accepted Islam and had achieved a great influence in Maghreb. The dream of each suffering and persecuted individual, even of the condemned, was to be able to meet Lalla Aziza when she came to the Medina, when the unfortunate one would fall upon his face to beg her intercession for him with the sultan.

During one of my subsequent excursions into the palace quarter of the Medina I was hailed by some women

in rags, sitting in the shadow of the corner of a wall. Finding them to be fortune-tellers, who for a few centuries would draw back for me the inscrutable curtain of the future, I faced the revelations and watched them throw on the ground some seeds, murmur something, look intently at me and study my hands and fingers. While they were thus occupying themselves, I in turn examined their faces and hands which were tattooed in blue or black with numerous geometric figures and signs. As I waited I sketched some of these designs which appealed to me as very interesting and later, when I studied them, proved doubly so, as I found among them the symbols of the fire-worshipers such as I have seen in Persia, mysterious signs current among Gipsies, others closely resembling the Egyptian hieroglyphs, the Babylonian zodiacal forms, Assyrian characters, letters used on "Stelae Mash-had's" and in Carthaginian and Kittimite inscriptions and finally the Jewish Star of Solomon and the ritual candle. Subsequently I collected in other parts of Africa more specimens of these signs tattooed on the faces of the women and on the hands of men and found that the comparison of them with ancient hieroglyphics yielded most unexpected and interesting results.

A few days later, when I was too weak from a fever which I had contracted through exposure to the sudden chill that comes with the night to accept any offers of hospitality, we were invited through Monsieur and Madame Halmagrand to take tea and later dinner with some local dignitaries, who were friends of theirs. After much protest Zofiette finally consented to accompany them to her first independent appearance among Berbers and

Arabs. I leave it to her to tell, through an excerpt from her journal, of her evening's experience.

"Madame Halmagrand paid us a visit today about four o'clock and conveyed to us the invitation to take tea in the house of their friend, Sidi Abia, an Arab millionaire. We went by carriage to a certain point in the Medina and from there scrambled on foot up through narrow, shaded and very dirty streets. To my great astonishment I had just learned from a cultured Arab that here in Morocco it is the fashion to make access to the richest private 'palaces' as difficult as possible. The more splendid the residence, the more twisted, dark and narrow are the streets through which one must approach it—a real labyrinth and then, in some nook, a splendid gate, the work of centuries ago, with its mosaics, carvings and beautiful marble; within it, another labyrinth, this time of corridors, porticoes and open courts; finally a magnificent park and palace full of unimagined luxury. The probable reason for this search for seclusion is the desire to protect their riches and their harems and to guard the traditions inherent in their religious beliefs.

"Just in this fashion, threading our way over stones, through dirt and all sorts of aromas, we finally arrived before the entrance of our friend's palace, where we were awaited by some *chouses*, who conducted us to the garden and then up a flight of stairs to the terrace. There we were received with great honor by our host, Sidi Abia, a man of some sixty years with a long gray beard and a large hooked nose surmounted by spectacles. Dressed in a white bournous and shod with light yellow babooshes, he came forward with his two sons, the elder

one quite ordinary and almost shabby and speaking only Arabic, while the younger was an elegant, well-dressed, good-looking youth of marked intelligence. He spoke excellent French and was at the time studying scientific agriculture. He was evidently the favorite of his father. Such a difference is often to be found among brothers in Morocco and is more than probably due to the custom of plural wives.

"We began our visit by going through the garden and the palace, which are the pride of the wealthy native owners and on which they count for making an impression on foreigners. We were consequently shown through every part of them, including the harem, where we saw many pretty and agreeable women. The younger son had rather advanced ideas, leaning strongly toward the French life and conventions. With some irony he explained to us many of the traditions and customs of his family, which was said to be a very ancient one. One must add that Arabs and Berbers, besides their innumerable Moslem and national traditions, possess customs and morals quite special to each particular family of recognized position, so that the result is a labyrinth of forms in which one can quite easily be lost.

"The palace was beautiful but rather neglected. The large hall that was used only for weddings and holiday receptions gave us the greatest pleasure. Under the beautifully carved ceiling were here and there alcoves with their masses of rugs and silk cushions, while in the center a fountain sang constantly its cadenced song, as it played in its marble basin. Waiting to receive us, the women of the harem were seated on the customary cushions,

among them the two wives of the host, the wife of the elder son, two married daughters and, finally, the little ones of the younger generation, all of them dressed like dolls in velvet bodices embroidered in gold and silver, full trousers, muslin turbans, colored sandals and great quantities of jewels. They greeted us very courteously, giving us their hands, which were small, hard and rough and painted with henna. The women said nothing, but only smiled and looked us over very attentively, touching our dresses, hats and shoes and even our shoulders and necks. The children were most attractive, especially the little granddaughters with curls as black as ebony and amber eyes. One of them developed a very evident fancy for me, took hold of my dress and followed me everywhere on her little henna-painted feet.

"After this visit to the harem we returned to the terrace, where Sidi Abia awaited us with tea and sweets. Then another old patriarch came in, who had the head of a prophet and whose shoulder every one in the household kissed with respect. After he had hurled at us in Arabic a quantity of compliments and wishes for our health and felicity, we began sipping our tea with mint, which is very agreeable and refreshing, if only it is not too hot or too sweet. Moreover, it is served in cups without spoons or saucers and must be drawn in through the teeth with loud smackings of the lips, if one would observe the finesse of custom. Cakes with almonds and figs fried in honey were as far as I went into the list of sweets, as the other dainties were too hard, too sweet and too rich for me, so that I could only make believe I was sampling them.

"The view from the terrace was grand and beautiful, particularly because of the brilliant sunset in the mountains. The possessions of Sidi Abia seemed to stretch out as far as one could see, and the old gentleman looked on them with delight, as he sat smoking a very long pipe and inhaling his tea.

"After having taken a grateful leave of our hosts, we searched out our carriage and drove off to a dinner which Madame Halmagrand told me had been arranged in honor of my husband, who had been compelled to remain ingloriously at home to nurse his fever. Again the twisted streets, the odors, dirt and darkness, then a palace breathing luxury, though not so striking as that of Sidi Abia. The drawing-room was not very large and was lighted by means of big kerosene-lamps placed on the floor. At the back of the room I was at first surprised to see an alcove containing two metal bedsteads piled with cushions that reached to the ceiling until I learned that these beds and cushions were never used but were kept there simply to display the wealth of the household. Also there were many mirrors of very ordinary workmanship and some Louis XV chairs—all quite out of keeping with the daintiness and good taste of the Arab interior decorations but quite the fashion and consequently *de rigueur* for the well-to-do.

"Our host, an old *cadi*, proved to be very nice, even though all his complimentary remarks had to come to us through a translator. His son, who was very good-looking and who was dressed in a beautiful national Arab costume of ancient times, played the part of host for his father, though he also spoke no French. The other guests

were already there—a young French couple and two very intelligent Arab twin brothers from Rabat, who had had a university education and were training for a diplomatic career under Marshal Lyautey. With the conversation flowing easily, I learned much of interest about Arab life and traditions. When dinner was to be served, we took our places on low cushions and watched the slaves, dressed as penitents in costumes girt with a rope, bring in a low, round table without a cloth and, as the first dish, an immense earthenware bowl full of roast chickens without dressing or garniture of any sort and not carved. As there were no knives and forks, I was quite bewildered and waited to see what my companions in misfortune would do. Madame Halmagrand, laughing at my troubled expression, reached out and pulled off with the thumb and two fingers of the right hand some bits of the breast and fat of the chicken. I followed her lead and then thought to bring my other hand into play to detach a drumstick and second joint, as I am more fond of the dark meat. But I was at once frowned upon by the other two ladies, after which I was informed in a whisper that one may eat only with the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand, which one must hold in the air during the whole dinner and lick well after each dish. Resigned to the exigent 'table manners' of my associates, I joined with them in the quest for dainty morsels and soon became quite adept.

"Then we were served mutton with almonds, saffron and marjoram swimming in gravy. I fished out delectable almonds and went below with pieces of bread to try to raise some bits of meat. Though I basked in the

comforting thought that I was becoming a rather skilled fisherman, the ladies disturbed me by laughing at my troubled and anxious expression.

"What seemed very strange to me was that the host sat near by but not at our table, directed the serving of the meal, inspected all dishes before they were put before us and solemnly nodded his head and clapped his hands whenever we had finished a course. Several times, having remarked that I was not eating or, at least, not eating enough to satisfy mine host, he turned to me and asked through the interpreter if the dish did not please me. Again I felt a nudge from my neighbor and heard whispered advice to make believe and not to disappoint the good old *cadi*. In spite of this seeming lapse on my part, we were all very gay and were enjoying ourselves tremendously.

"The third dish was roast mutton, so tender that I easily succeeded in plucking off some enjoyable morsels, while the Arab students made havoc of the rich dish, loudly smacking their lips and drinking a great deal of water, that was served us in immense glasses. Personally I was afraid of the water, as it was of a yellowish, muddy hue and seemed redolent of typhoid.

"Following all this, we were next served *kouskous* with raisins, hard-boiled eggs and the inevitable mutton. To my joy we were given spoons, though I was surprised to see the Arabs continue to use their fingers, deftly rolling the gruel into small balls that held together long enough to make the journey to their mouths. Then came the dessert—luscious grapes of every shade and nearly as large as plums. At last a gilded basin and ewer were



brought with pink soap and a pink-embroidered towel, and all of us in turn washed with infinite pleasure and relief. After the ablutions servants brought frankincense and they sprayed our costumes with rose and violet perfumes, following which tea was served with the ever-present agreeable aroma of mint and accompanied by additional sweets.

"With the tea before us, Madame Halmagrand asked the *cadi* to join us, whereupon the old man saluted in quite a military fashion, removed his sandals to come to us barefooted as a mark of his deep respect and took his place on the cushions. During the interval between the last course and the serving of tea he had disappeared for a few moments to partake of his own banquet with his sons in a neighboring room. The wives and daughters ate after them and what was left was for the servants.

"At ten o'clock we arose to go and were escorted to the door with many expressions of good-will and felicity. The old *cadi* was very anxious to meet my husband and exhibited a redoubled interest and respect when he was shown the ruby ring which I was wearing and which had been given him by the Hutuktu of Narabanchi Kuré in Mongolia during his flight from Krasnoyarsk in 1920.

"On my return to the hotel I found my invalid better and demanding food, so I finally yielded and gave him a cup of tea with two soft-boiled eggs and some bread and butter. I was afraid it might be too much for him—this after my own dinner in the household of the *cadi*!"

On the evening of our last day in the capital of the Black Tyrant we sallied out to have a final look at the ruins and the town. The moon was already far up by

the time we reached Bab Mansur, and the walls of Muley Ismail were drawn on the moon-washed background of sky as indented, black silhouettes. We knew that behind them lay ruins and crumbling stone, contrasting sadly with the proud boast of the Black Sultan:

"I erected these walls and palaces. Let others destroy them, if they can."

For two centuries men have been destroying the work of the despot, erecting with the stones, marble and mosaics of his buildings their palaces and temples all over Morocco. But Dar Kbira, Dar el-Makhzen, Bab Mansur and Jama still remain, powerful and terrible reminders of the cruel disregard of one despotic man. By them stands also the sarcophagus of Mohammed Ben Aïssa and near it the tomb of the enigmatical ruler himself, whose spirit seems still to haunt these works of his hand, pondering over some new ferocity or sighing sadly and calling hopelessly for Lalla Aziza, the "beloved white gazelle."

## CHAPTER XVI

### A SULTAN'S PALACE O'ER A PIRATES' NEST

ONCE on our westward way, this time between Meknes and Rabat, we again ran through a well-cultivated region where colonists supplemented the natives in the agricultural development.

In the valley of the Fra, one of the affluents of the Shu, I noticed many small tortoises, *Emys Leprosa*, crawling along the bank near the water. On the grass-covered hills we frightened hares of a type that are common here, *Lepus mediterraneus*, and rabbits, *Cuniculus alpinus*, larger than the European ones and having short ears and dark-brown marking on their backs. Then not far from the military post of Bel Amri, which lies behind the half-European, half-Arab village in the southeastern part of the fertile plain of Beni Ahsen, I noticed a flock of bustard of the variety that is known from Senegal to the Mediterranean and is distinguished by their diminutive size—*Otis Arabs*.

From Knitra the character of the country changed, showing a sandy region interspersed with marshes and surrounded by shrubs, in which wild boars were known to be numerous. South of this the great Mamora forest of cork-oaks stretches away over some five hundred odd

square miles between the rivers Sbu and Regreg. Not far from Knitra the largest river of Morocco, the Sbu, or the *Subur Ammis magnificus et navigabilis* described by Pliny, empties into the sea. It was at the mouth of this river in the fifth century B.C. that the Carthaginian commercial colony of Thymiatherion was founded and that the Berber tribe of Beni Ifrem later established their little town of Mehediya, which became a nest of daring and relentless pirates. Portuguese came and settled here for a time, followed by Spaniards and Dutch; but they were all forced to leave the shores of the Sbu in 1681 by the warlike Ismail. In the earlier centuries of the Christian era the Romans had maintained an outpost near Knitra, attracted there, as was true of all the subsequent foreigners, by the opportunity the river afforded to reach into the heart of the country.

The Carthaginians, who always extracted the various forms of wealth from the country where they had their colonies or trading posts, took slaves from this region and left behind them ethnic traces and some visible influence of their occupation, if only in the form of the stigmas that are to this very day tattooed on the faces of the women from the Gharb and Beni Hassen tribes. Distinct traces were also left by the Romans, who readily married native women here, just as in all the other parts of North Africa, and infused much of their blood into the Berbers, who thus became in part the descendants of the citizens and warriors of the magnificent Caesars.

Turning south along the shore of the Atlantic, we passed through Sali just as the shining, white town and its guardian minarets were being shrouded in the soft

veil of twilight, crossed the marshy delta of the river Regreg and entered an ancient gate of the city of Rabat, the principal seat of the reigning Sultan and of the French protectorate.

The following morning I paid a visit to the minister, Monsieur Urbain Blanc, who was acting as the temporary representative of Marshal Lyautey during the chief's absence in France. Monsieur Blanc received me very courteously and accorded me the privilege of a long and interesting talk, in which he explained the program and the policy of France in Morocco with the same sincerity and frankness that had appealed so strongly to me and had come somewhat as a surprise from General de Chambrun in Fez. The minister loved this country and was enthusiastic over the recent organization of its powers and opportunities by Marshal Lyautey, who has faith in Moroccans and in the final success of the action of France, who regards herself as the heir of Rome in Africa.

Through the kindly suggestion of the minister to the chief of the bureau of civil administration, Monsieur Leroy, that he should show us the interesting features of the place, we were able to visit the city and the surrounding country under most delightful auspices. While running through the rich and closely settled locality east of the town, I realized why the Sultan should have wished to transfer his capital from Fez to this Atlantic port. From here it were easier to send out armies to conquer or calm independent or revolting tribes, just as from here he could reach out more quickly and with more security for the tribute from the High Atlas, since the road lead-

ing along the seashore affords a short and direct route on which his emissaries would not be threatened by the warlike mountaineer tribes. This ocean road is well guarded and defended not only from Rabat to the Atlas country but northward to the frontiers of the Rif.

For a long time the masters of Fez and Meknes had turned their eyes toward the mouth of the Bu Regreg, but it was only after a long period and with great difficulty that they finally succeeded in gaining this important post with its dominated land route along the shore and its point of embarkation for war or commerce with Spain, as the mood of the moment dictated. The independent tribe of Beni Ifrem had been in control here, and before them the powerful "sea panthers" of pirates ruled the two towns of Rabat and Sali, from where they set out on daring expeditions and beat off all attacks until the seventeenth century, having formed the "Republic of the Two Shores" and combined in a general federation with the pirates of Algeria. But this is a story of rather modern times, and before the pirates, before the Beni Ifrem, this strategic point was in the hands of the Berghwata tribe, who were pagans and who, as I was informed by some learned Berbers and Arabs in Marrakesh and Sali, preserved for a long time the tenets of the cult of the Phoenician goddess, Astarte. The emblem of this goddess, a moon between the horns of a bull, is even now tattooed on the faces of some of the Berber women. These same Berghwata later accepted Islam but soon fell away into heresies and during nearly two centuries fought with the orthodox Moslems of the country.

Going back into earliest times, we find that the region

around the mouth of the river was peopled over two thousand years ago by the Phoenicians, then later by the Romans, who established their post of Salacolonía here. It is evidently a very old abode of man. Pliny writes that in his time elephants still lived to the south of the Regreg and that the villagers in the valley trafficked not only in agricultural products but also in ivory, wild animals, fruit and rare qualities of wood.

In later centuries the Andalusian Moors and the Jews that were banished from Spain began arriving here, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries art and industry began to develop among the mixed population of the two towns. Synchronously Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and English ships, returning from India, had to pass near the Moroccan shores, from where the pirates put out to attack the brigantines and frigates in this trade, pillaged the cargo and captured both men and women. In this period new streams of Anglo-Saxon, Indian and Malay blood thus found their way into the veins of the Berber pirate colonies. It was only at the beginning of the nineteenth century that the Morocco sultans destroyed this nest of freebooters and made a death penalty for any of their subjects to capture Christians. Later, as order under the sultans grew, the population of these towns separated into two distinct bodies, Sali remaining the seat of the former piratical families and of Berbers from everywhere, while Rabat became exclusively the home of Arabs and Andalusian Moors. Some of these Andalusian families, it is said, keep until now the keys of their old houses in Cordova and Granada, from which they were expelled and banished by the Spaniards. I heard

that in one Andalusian family an old sword is preserved, on which is engraved a Latin inscription:

Unsheathe me not without cause;  
Replace me not without honor.

Rabat and Sali, these two towns which are always competing for honors and gain, made a strong impression on me. The inhabitants of Sali look with disdain upon the people from the opposite bank and have a common saying that runs:

"If you want a liar, look for him in Rabat."

Sali is a concentrated, mysterious town of narrow streets, lined with the vaults and stores of the ancient pirates, who are succeeded today by bold and energetic merchants. We took tea with one of the inhabitants of the town, Si Jafar Naciri, living in the Maanna Street in a house built after the old model with much storage room for goods and able to withstand a long siege. To-day it is renovated and, in place of chained slaves, chests of loot and firearms, it contains the beautiful library of the hospitable Monsieur Naciri and the other appointments of a modern house of culture.

On the other bank of the river Rabat is more and more losing the appearance of a Moroccan town with the new European buildings already elbowing their way among the old structures of the Medina and the Mellah and with the palace of the Resident General and the buildings of the military and civilian offices dominating the European quarter, that presses itself right up to the lines of the Medina. When one visits this beautiful modern city with its unusual architecture, the crenelated walls of the old



town and their monumental gates of Bab el-Alu, er-Ruah and Zaïr make a strange impression, seeming almost to be artificial decorations on the strange background of the ocean.

One Friday Monsieur Leroy proposed that we go with him to see the sultan leaving for the mosque. The palace, Dar el-Makhzen, is outside the Zaïr gate at the end of a large *place* used for military parades. The white walls and minaret of the mosque, El-Sunna, rise at the opposite end of the *place*.

As we arrived, we were thrilled by the sight of a splendid body of horsemen, in white bournouses and turbans with their rifles resting on their hips, drawn up around the whole square and keeping back the crowd. Before the open gate of the palace a company of the Black Guard stood rigidly at attention—strong men in white trousers and short, white jackets with red fezes to add the note of color, while behind them the military band was assembled.

We stopped near the door, where Monsieur Leroy spoke with a group of palace dignitaries that were gathered there to await the signal for the beginning of the ceremony. After a moment we were directed to the interior of the palace, where we were given a place in the gallery that surrounded the whole of the entrance court, in which were waiting a large group of palace officials, high mullahs, servants and the personal orchestra of the sultan. This musical element in the sultan's entourage was made up of over fifty musicians, for the most part youths of from only twelve to fifteen years in gaudy uniforms heavy with gold and silver lace, and equipped

with brass wind-instruments of all sizes, clarionets and flutes. Soon the doors giving on the inner court were flung back and opened to us a view of a corner of the lovely park and of a shining, white palace with two coal-black eunuchs at either side of the entrance steps. From somewhere a trumpet sounded, and then a small green carriage, ornamented with red and gilt arabesques and drawn by an excessively fat little white horse with a plume of feathers on the top of its head, drew up at the stairs. The sultan appeared from the palace and took his place in the carriage. As he entered the court where we were waiting, the gathering of courtiers, stretched in two lines between the outer and inner gates, bowed low in salute, while the orchestra let out a most unexpected, piercing shout of welcome and began playing a lively air with many of the performers well off the key.

With the advance toward the outer gate we had time to observe the other elements of the procession. First came the vizier on a white horse caparisoned with a red saddle and cloth, followed by other dignitaries advancing slowly on foot with a measured, solemn tread. Behind these came another of the courtiers, a tall, stout, quite black old man with a sparse gray beard, walking in a strange manner—backwards, with his face ever turned toward the sultan and moving with such an air of ease and certainty that one felt sure he must have had long practice in his part. I took him to be the chief of the eunuchs. Immediately behind the slaves who were leading the pony by the bridle two courtiers walked close to the wheels of the carriage and continually waved long silken streamers to keep the flies away from the face of

their master. Behind the carriages well-dressed slaves and stable servants led seven saddled horses of different colors, one for each day of the week.

We had a close and leisurely view of this sultan of Morocco, Mulay Yusuf of the Alawite dynasty, who reigns under the protection of France and has made great progress in the direction of uniting his country with the general current of modern civilization. However, the anarchistic tendencies of the Berbers, occasional dynastic troubles, propaganda put out by some of the religious organizations under the direction and guidance of the Marabouts and, recently, the secret, destructive work of Soviet agents have often floated dark clouds up over the horizon of the sultan's life, clouds that have left their shadows upon the pale, full, rather wise-looking face of Mulay Yusuf with its many wrinkles and its eyes that tell of anxiety and longing.

Outside the gate the band struck up a loud march, the soldiers presented arms and then swung into line to conduct the sultan to the mosque of El-Sunna, that the master might take counsel of Allah and pray for the country, for happiness and for the glory of his reign.

On our way back to the hotel we drove through the French quarter, passing the picturesque palace of the Resident General, the administrative buildings and the lovely villas, whose gardens reached down to play with the sea, and feeling before all these a strange contrast of impressions as they mingled with the pink walls and old gates with their ancient inscriptions, the mysterious Hassan tower and the powerful square mass of the Udaya *kasba*, more especially as we still had before us the vivid

picture of the sultan's cortège with its black guard, its ancient etiquette and the attendants fanning away the flies.

Even though the feeling of strange contrasts and astonishment may be the first, superficial emotion, after a time that of pride gradually asserts itself, mingled with a real satisfaction that the civilization of the white race can respect and guard not only those relics of the past that are cut in stone or molded in bronze, but also those that are preserved in the customs and cults of the living, that it can calmly continue its work and its life alongside the quite different currents of thought and life of other peoples whose spirit is foreign to its own. As I have had occasion to observe great masses of colored men during my wanderings and travels, I have always felt the dangers that seemed to be menacing them from every side, their helplessness and their terror before the unknown of the future. Here in Morocco I had an impression such as one feels when a doctor arrives at the side of a sick man who is threatened with death unless scientific medical aid be tendered, or when the firemen arrive at a building that has just burst into flames. Involuntarily one's eyes turn to the 'Shellah minaret, to the Hassan tower and to the walls of the Udaya—to all these which speak so eloquently of the dire illnesses which once tormented this land and of the fires which gutted it.

## CHAPTER XVII

### MAGICIANS OF THE MARKET-PLACE

SAYING good-bye to our friends, Monsieur Urbain Blanc and Monsieur Leroy, we set out once more along the coast road to Casablanca, but remained only two days in this port that holds little interest for a student of the real life of Morocco and turned inland again toward Marrakesh, the Berber capital and the "Paris of Maghreb."

Through a fertile and well-cultivated country we made our way to the river of Umm er-Rbi'a, beyond which the fields, pastures and large villages, like Ber Reshid, Settat and Ben Abbu, disappeared and left us surrounded by a stony, barren and sometimes totally dead desert, where one meets nothing but the occasional camel caravans, automobiles, lizards and scorpions. This landscape, so tiring in its sameness, stretched itself to the foot of the Jebilet range, through which we ran along a winding road that brought us out through a narrow cleft from where we had our first view of Marrakesh, not really of the town itself but of the oasis surrounding it on all sides except from the south, where the old Berber capital reaches right up to the edge of the desert that unrolls itself from the foot of the Atlas range. We could, how-

ever, see, in the midst of the velvet green of the date-palms and across the shimmering Tensift River, a tower raising itself like the needle of Cleopatra on the deep blue background of the sky. It was Kutubia, the minaret of the mosque built by Yakub el-Mansur and designed by the creator of the Giralda in Seville and of the tragic tower of Hassan in Rabat.

As the road pierced the oasis and was flanked by the tall, feathery palms, *Phoenix dactylifera*, with their luscious burden of red or golden fruit, we discovered that the whole oasis was divided by adobe walls into rectangles of private property. Pools and streams of water was everywhere in the landscape, with men, sheep and camels completing a picture that made a very definite impression of calm, welfare and hospitality. It was so picturesque on every side, there was such an abundance of gurgling water, singing birds and inviting shade and the sky was so bright and clear that there seemed no place left in the life of the verdant spot for hatred and strife. We were at once caught up by the spirit of it all and forgot our fatigue, though we had completed a run of over one hundred forty miles. We entered the Gheliz quarter, where the French live, and sought out our hostelry, the Hôtel du Pacha, set in the midst of eucalyptus-trees and palms. We were no more than in our quarters when the hotel manager rushed up and led us off in haste to some rooms with a southern exposure, chattering excitedly the while:

"Come quick, come quick! It never occurs at this time of year."

The ranges of the High Atlas, reaching up one above

the other in a menacing threat toward the sky, towered over the palms at a distance of some thirty odd miles to the south. In the months of September and October the summits are constantly shrouded in heavy clouds, so that only the dark, blue wall of the mountainsides is to be seen. But this evening above the rocks the very tops of the ranges glimmered marvelously in their brilliant white sheen of snow and ice. Even as we watched, the purity of the snows began to yield to the delicate pink hues which the rays of the setting sun tinted them. After a moment this gave way in turn to the gray tones that rose up out of the darkening valleys, before they were all engulfed in the returning masses of enveloping clouds. The phenomenon lasted for only a few moments, during which it was, however, magnificent in its grandeur and beauty of contrasts.

Although I had been so weak in Rabat from the fever contracted at Meknes that the doctor ordered me away to the mountains at once, I had little conception of what the change to this air and these surroundings could mean. I had been in Marrakesh but a little while, when I felt that all people ill in body and spirit would do well to go there, where in the shadow of the palms, in the beautiful parks, within the calm of the pantheon of the Saadian *sherifs* or the tomb of Yusuf ibn Teshufin and near the vivifying fountains of water coming down from the snowy summits of the Atlas, illness and pain are banished not only from the body but from the spirit, unless it be some sweet sadness or longing as light and wavering as the desert mirage, as gentle as the voice of the water in the fountains of Sidi Hassan. And this is the reason why

the sultan, the great caids of the mountains, the pashas, imams and the rich merchants from Fez, Meknes and Rabat have their palaces and villas here, and not because Marrakesh is the Paris of Morocco and in season boasts all the metropolitan attractions of our ultra-modern civilization.

The morning following our arrival, before going to present our letter from Minister Blanc to the senior resident French official, we thought to wander through the town to orient ourselves a bit and to gather an initial, general impression of the place under our own guidance. At first we saw little out of the ordinary except the beautiful Kutubia minaret with its seven distinct stories and its unusual enamel decorations that reminded one of the turquoise of Persia and with its three golden balls set with jewels offered by the wife of Sultan El-Mansur. A whole regiment of spirits defends each of these balls, and woe to him who would dare to touch one of them. A little further on we found a *kubba* of peculiar construction, provided, as it was, with the usual four walls but without the stereotyped dome. Under the branches of a solitary tree that lent its shadow to the tomb there sat a well-dressed native, who, we found, spoke French and answered our curiosity by telling us that we were before the tomb of the sultan, Ibn Teshufin, founder of the Almoravide dynasty in Morocco, who had sprung up like a storm from his oasis in the Sahara at the beginning of the eleventh century to sweep through the mountains and conquer their tribes, to build Marrakesh, to confirm the faith in Allah and to leave for his descendants a tradi-



tion of conquest that carried them eventually to the throne of Andalusia.

"Why has the tomb no dome nor roof?" I inquired.

"The spirit of the sultan nightly leaves the tomb to journey to the north and east to course and guard the bournes of Maghreb. When the first dome was erected, the spirit destroyed it the very night of its completion and subsequently repeated this several times. Now no one dares to try to impede the spirit, as every one knows that this would be followed by great misfortunes."

As we wandered through the *suks*, we were especially attracted by the interesting displays of old arms and weapons and of the native jewelry. Among some very old weapons I picked out a so-called "*khenjer*," a curved knife of the Sous tribe, lodged in a scabbard of chiseled copper, and with this a *schula*, the straight blade of the Shlu tribe, also in a copper scabbard, this time with a strip of velvet let into it. In the Berber jewelry we found the most unmistakable evidence of Persian and Byzantine influences. In the diadems, arm- and ankle-bands, ear-rings and large trinkets worn on necklaces there were many bits of amber and enamel as well as cabochons, brilliant stones and even bits of glass. We were especially interested in finding silver armlets with radiating points, such as are worn by the women of Central Africa, and speculated upon the possibility that the Almoravides, having conquered Timbuktu and Senegal, brought back this fashion from Senegal and the Niger.

Through narrow streets we finally came out upon the *place* where the administrative office was located. Our



rounding the singers, musicians, jugglers, snake-charmers, quacks and fortune-tellers who come in from everywhere. Allah only knows who is not there at some time during the afternoon. But it turned out that the grave bards and religious poets, the connoisseurs and creators of *madih*, or poems glorifying the Prophet, visit but rarely this more common ground, reserving to themselves the little *place* near the Kutubia mosque.

I was told by many of the residents that no political propaganda is felt here in Marrakesh, where, perhaps more than in any other part of Morocco, the native life flows along in its own channel, not mingling with that of the French administration. Though I am not certain that this statement may be accepted literally, I very distinctly sensed the friendly attitude of the Berbers and Arabs toward the Europeans and did not remark those distrustful and hostile looks which one so frequently met in Tasa, Fez and even in Sali.

When we mingled among the entertainers later in the day, we stopped first on the edge of a circle of white-clad Arabs who were watching a little stout man, with slanting eyes that made him look like a Kalmuck, performing what appeared to be a very dangerous trick. In his hands he rubbed and fondled a round, smooth stone, accompanying his actions with a stream of comment that periodically sent the crowd into peals of laughter. Suddenly he was silent and threw the far-from-light stone well into the air, offering to it, as it came down, his bald skull to break its fall. We heard a dull thud and a sound resembling that of breaking bones. A shout of fright escaped from some veiled women near us, and a little

child began to cry. The artist revived in a moment and resumed his polishing of the stone together with his illuminating comment before sending it aloft on another mission of destruction. We watched him attentively and soon had the solution of his trick. Just before the stone reached his forehead, he jerked his head aside and took the fall on the strongly developed muscles of his neck; but he made the movement with such incredible speed that it carried the deceit through without detection. It required some longer observation to run down the noise of crackling bones, which we finally located as that of stones rattled above the belt or within the sleeve of his bournous.

Later, when we saw the man had finished his performance, we watched him rubbing the muscles of his neck and quite openly taking some stones from the sleeve of his bournous to toss them into his property basket. As he dressed, he chattered continually and kept the crowd in a merry mood. Finally, making the sign of the salaam, he shot them a parting bolt that made his audience roar and clap their hands. The *chouse* whom Monsieur Delarue had kindly loaned us as interpreter, while he finished his office work, rendered for us the juggler's words with an evident effort in maintaining the seriousness which his office demanded:

"*Mumeni*, when you hear that they are needing another teacher in the *medersa*, tell the wise ones that you know Ali, who also possesses a strong, hard head!"

In the next circle four dancers of the Shlu tribe, dressed in white robes girt with red belts and wearing turbans, were going through a slow, rhythmical dance which suggested to my wife the first movements of the

Caucasian *lezgine*. Near by, a boy made his trained dog and little monkey perform tricks for his restricted audience, as he was encircled only by children, and these so lightly clad that they had not a single place where they might hide their admission fees. Determined to have some reward for his running monologue and for the tricks of his trained animals, the juvenile performer snatched a lump of sugar from the hands of one of his admiring onlookers, bit off a part of it, gave the dog and the monkey a lick each at the remaining moiety and then handed this back to its crying owner, who immediately took the precaution to guard it from further spoliation by putting it in his mouth and was thus appeased.

Down at the further end of Jemaa el-Fna another crowd surrounded an itinerant quack. Those who know the country say that real doctors are to be found among the Berbers and Arabs but that they are fast disappearing; yet pure medical science, as it is known in European countries, does not exist in Moslem lands today. Only traditions remain, and most of these are derived from the realm of magic, inasmuch as all the superstitions of the peoples with whom the Arabs and Berbers have come into contact have injected themselves into the questions of health as well as into the world of sorcery. The Arab medical book known as the "*Rhama*" is an unordered collection of magical recipes together with expositions of the healing properties of certain plants, salts and mineral springs. This name "*Rhama*" brought to my mind the "*Rama*" of Central Asia, whom the Lamaites looked upon as a magus, a doctor and a chief. The resemblance between the name of this book and the word "Brahman"

of the Veda cult in India is also very suggestive. In the Atharva-Veda, which is a book of magic formulas, the word "Brahman" is used to signify prayer and incantations. At the courts of the Indian princes a *Brahman* performed the functions of a fortune-teller, incantator and doctor. It is more than possible that the Moslems in their fight with Buddhism took from India the elements of their book, *Rhama*. The Moslem doctor, or hakim, knows magic formulas and the properties of herbs, possessing as well the mysterious traditions of Plato, Aristotle, Hermes Trismegistus and the Alexandrian school. The attainment of the title and position of a doctor comes about through the study, by a man learned in the reading of the Koran, of magic or medical books and the subsequent attestation of the *ijaza* of the *medersa* that he has familiarized himself with the *Rhama*, which is the equivalent of saying that he is a qualified hakim. Also, each *sherif* is by virtue of his exalted position through descent from the Prophet an *ex-officio* doctor.

It is said to be very difficult today to find a real hakim who possesses and preserves the knowledge of the renowned Arabian doctors of the past, whereas, on the other hand, barbers, smiths and charlatans of all descriptions are practising everywhere as doctors, though they are but arrant quacks in reality. Although the French authorities have begun a campaign against these irregular practitioners which is driving them away from inhabited centers, I was told in Berguent that certain quacks reputed to have great power still exist and that the sick make long and tiring pilgrimages to reach them.

This one of the brotherhood working openly in the

*place* was so thorough a charlatan that he was not even abashed when we approached him in company with an official *chouse*, for he turned his impudent face in our direction and winked one of his eyes as though he were plainly saying:

"My physics will not help, but they will also do no harm; so do not prevent me from fooling these poor individuals. I, too, must live."

A cure was just in progress. The figure of a be-draggled woman, wrapped in a dirty rag of a bournous, stood unveiled before the hakim. The greenish-gray hue of her face combined with the lusterless eyes and a cough that shook her wasted frame to make clear the severity of the patient's malady. She stood before the wonder-worker humble and silent with her gaze fixed upon a figure which he had drawn in the sand. Then the "doctor" held up a bottle containing, as he loudly advertised, water from a magic spring—but which he probably took from the nearest well—recited continuously some unintelligible phrases, prayed intermittently and then touched the head, breast and abdomen of the patient with the bottle. Following this, he made her drink some of the water, took from her a coin and threw the dirty *haik* over her face, as he lightly pushed her toward the crowd to make place for the next "happy victim." As the woman walked away stiff, indifferent and silent, the *chouse*, laughing, explained to me:

"The people here in Marrakesh continue to go to the hakims in spite of the fact that there is an immense French hospital for natives in Mamunia Park. They are so stupid!"

"You are not from these parts?" I asked.

"Oh, no sir!" he exclaimed with pride. "I am an Arab from Algiers."

Suddenly from up the square we heard drums, pipes, sharp cries and weird singing. When we learned from our *chouse* that the snake-charmers were beginning a special performance, we hurriedly made our way to the circle gathering around the two conjurers, who sat on the ground with their linen-covered baskets before them. Between their drumming and cries they repeated frequently the same phrase.

"They say that a holy man will soon arrive upon whom the snakes are powerless to work any harm, as he is endowed with magic strength and is loved of Allah," the *chouse* interpreted with a contemptuous smile.

The next moment one of the men had taken two venomous-looking vipers and had thrust them into the faces of the circle of onlookers, which, though it broke in retreat and trampled its members, at the same time laughed over the snake man's joke.

"Welcome to the Faithful in the name of 'Allah," sounded suddenly in a powerful and melodious voice. "Welcome in the name of Sidi Bel Abbes, in the name of Ben Sliman, in the name of Sidi Abd el-Aziz, in the name of Abd Allah ben Hosim ben Reshid!"

A murmur of the crowd rose in answer to these words. As I turned I saw a rider clad in white and mounted on a fine, gray beast. The light wind that was coming down off the mountains played with the shock of his thick, curly hair. The rather pallid, emaciated face, expressive and almost beautiful, took its light from big, dark eyes.



Stroking his black beard with a small, nervous hand, the rider made a long announcement to the crowd, toward the end of which he raised his voice until it took on the tones of a sharp cry.

"He is praising Allah, repeating some of his ninety-nine names, and challenges djinns, the demons of snakes and the demons of their venom to battle with him," explained the *chouse*.

During the speech of this dramatically entered conjurer, the crowd remained serious and reverent and piously raised their hands in prayer, repeating after the speaker the words of his petitions and the numerous names of Allah, as well as those of the holy patrons of the town. When the rider had finished speaking, he leaped from his horse and strode to the center of the circle, where his lesser associates crawled toward him on their knees and kissed the hem of his bournous. They presented him with a single viper, which he held above his head as he began saying something to the throng. Then, grasping the viper by its neck, he looked steadily into its eyes, as though calming it. When he had finished with this one, he threw it to the ground, while his helpers took out from the baskets other vipers and one longer and thinner type, resembling the *Naja* but totally black, which lay apart from the others.

Talking continuously, making violent gestures and darting swift glances about with his eyes, the conjurer caught up the vipers and threw them from one spot to another. Then he seized one of them and opened its jaws with a stick, so that the long, sharp fangs with venom dropping from them could be plainly seen. After this he

carried the viper round the circle, exhibiting it to his gaping audience and reminding them of the deadly poison of the animal. When he had dropped it among the other snakes, he straightened up and in solemn tones made the announcement that he would now be bitten by a viper and would prove that Allah had given him power to fight and subdue the djinns of venom.

At this point I began observing most carefully the movements of the conjurer. Without seeming to look down on them, he touched each one of the snakes but picked up the very one which he had just compelled to throw its venom and thus to empty for a considerable period the glands that secrete and carry the poisonous saliva. Having once more opened the jaws of the snake, he touched its nose to his cheek and then, after a moment of violent shouting, began to beat his matted head with the bared fangs, thus probably getting rid of the last traces of venom that remained. With all this done, he allowed the angered viper to rest against his forehead, until we saw plainly two distinct bites and blood freely flowing from them.

I know that in India the fakir-conjurers of cobras are accustomed since childhood to the venom of the snakes, as they are inoculated with gradually increasing doses of the saliva until they are rendered immune. Confident that the viper had little venom left in its mouth, I felt sure that the performance was finished; but it continued, and with increased tension, while the drums rolled and the pipes whimpered, only to drop into a sudden and contrasting silence. The bitten conjurer smeared the blood over his whole face and disheveled his hair, after which

he ordered one of his assistants to give him a drum and the basin of burning coals which had been blown red by the other. When these were placed before him, he was suddenly seized by a sort of convulsion, during which his face suffused with blood and his lips swelled and became purple. He coughed, and his mouth frothed with foam. We were apparently seeing the tortures of a man suffering from viper poisoning and watched him pick up the black snake, which lay at one side, bite its head, loosen the skin from its neck and begin to pull at this with his teeth.

Then he twisted the writhing form into a knot, closely resembling that on the enigmatical coat of arms of Seville, threw it on the burning coals and, when he had sniffed the roasting flesh, jumped to his feet, pushed back the hair from his forehead and showed that no traces of the bites remained.

The crowd roared in approval and relief, after they had been astonished and harassed by the conjurer's representation. With a rather lavish contribution of funds dropping into the basket of one of the assistants, the man of mysterious powers distributed amulets against snake bites to his audience. But here it was not the magic of the desert but European science that had been drawn upon and had triumphed, for these amulets were bits of paper carrying legends made through the medium of a rubber stamp and aniline colors. As we gave two francs, we received five of these charms, so that the reader need have no worry for us during our journey through Central Africa, the country of snakes, under the protection of the talismans of Abd Allah ben Hosim ben Reshid, that is,

if the tropical rains do not wash off the synthetic dyes.

On our way back to the palace where the office of Monsieur Delarue was located, we stopped for a moment before an orchestra composed of Arab violins, mandolins, guitars, flutes and the omnipresent drum. When they began playing, the sounds proved so discordant and so lacking in all melody that Zofiette cried out, according to the established customs of the Moslem:

"In the name of Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, Bach, Mendelssohn, Wieniawski; in the name of Rozycki, Szymanowski, Szopski, Niewiadomski and Rogowski; in the name of all *wali* and *ulema* of music let us fly!"

When we reached the administrative building, Monsieur Delarue was awaiting us with the car to take us to see Dar el-Makhzen, the palace of the sultan. Once a year the head of the state comes to Marrakesh to collect taxes and receive homage from the mountain tribes. With its great area the palace reminds one of the vast ruins of Mulay Ismail in Meknes, though there are no ruins here. In the large outer court the Sultan receives the chieftains of the mountain tribes and addresses them from a small balcony. Another court is given over to the palace slaves, who are for the most part black, owing to the long-established preference of the Alawite dynasty for Negroes and Arabs rather than for the more warlike, independent and unreliable Berbers.

The great fruit-plantation of Aguedal stretches far away behind the walls of the palace. From the rich yield of its olive-, orange-, pomegranate-, fig-, lemon- and apricot-trees Glawi, the Bashaw of Marrakesh and the powerful feudal prince of the Atlas, yearly receives great

revenues, sometimes as much as five hundred thousand francs for oranges and one hundred fifty thousand for figs alone. It is within the Aguedal that the harem ladies walk and play during the sultan's sojourn in Marrakesh. Among them are some European women, as well as beautiful Georgians and Tcherkess natives from the Caucasus. Of course, during these days, all the entrances to the gardens are closed and carefully watched by the Black Guard.

As we rode through the city and its environs, I could not but note the marked difference between this southern capital and the northern one, Fez. There in the city of Idris, the home of exacting science, fanatical faith and debauch that is deceitfully shrouded in mysticism and mystery, the population is pressed together in narrow streets and small squares tucked away among mosques, frowning *dars*, the homes of merchants and the dens of the poor; here, though there is a similar labyrinth of *suks*, the *places* are larger, there are more unwalled gardens open to the eyes of ordinary man, greater spaces void of buildings, where people can collect, much more accessible mosques and *medersas* and, with it all, a much closer touch with the life of the palms, of the mountains and of the desert. Here the development of thought is less restricted by the laws of the Faith and by tradition, and no walls can encompass it. This is noticeable even in the attitude of the native toward foreigners, for the distrust, contempt and hate of Fez are replaced by friendliness, comprehension and hospitality, which would seem to say:

"Everybody must live, and where could life be more easy and happy than in Marrakesh, in the gay whirl of

Jemaa el-Fna and in the shade of the forest of palms? Therefore, let the men of other lands live and enjoy it with us, praising the name of Allah, the One God, and showing respect to the great sultans who made here a paradise on earth."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A VERSAILLES UNDER ATLAS SNOWS

“LET us pay a visit to one more paradise,” proposed Monsieur Delarue. “I shall take you to Menar.”

As we wound through the palm-forest, we passed the tents of the Sahara nomads who come here to ply their trade of smiths and their less regular vocation of quacks and sorcerers. They are not much liked, these men in dark-blue bournouses and these unveiled and much-tattooed women who so readily display their arms and necks. Besides shoeing horses, these smiths bleed men, compound medicines and perform incantations which are connected with the ancient iron-magic, that was born when the caveman first saw in the fire a trickle of metal flowing from the stone and heard an unknown voice from somewhere whisper:

“This belongs to you; take it, be powerful through it and rule over everything!”

The mysterious Hephaestus, Pluto, Beelzebub, gods and spirits of smiths, fire and iron; a horseshoe, talisman of happiness; iron crowns of kings, iron crosses—all this was born of iron-magic and in all this the smith had a hand. He was respected but at the same time feared as a man having relations with unknown and evil sources of

strength and with invisible and dangerous beings. In time contempt arose and became so pronounced that smiths among all the nations were obliged to form a separate caste, marrying only within it and passing down their art from one generation to another. Gradually it came about that they practiced as doctors, especially for bleeding and for cauterizing with hot irons the bites of snakes.

Here in the south of Morocco most of these natives of the Sahara or those camping along its borders are smiths and, as such, are despised as pariahs, with whom a Berber will not sit at table, nor can a Berber or Arab fight one of them without injury to the honor and traditions of his family. When a Berber wants to offend and insult some one, he flings at him:

*"Haddad ben Haddad (You smith, son of a smith)!"*

Leaving behind us the black tents of the smiths, the old crones and the younger damsels of the blazing desert, we were soon out upon and across the open plain beyond which lay the olive-groves of Menar. The neglect at once evident among the olives and other greenery made it plain that the place would not have been worth a visit after the excursion to Aguedal, were it not for a nook that was filled with romance, even though it struck a melancholy note. Over a low wall branches of old fruit-trees hung, and between them one could see a solitary pavilion, roofed in gleaming green tiles. As a native responded to the call of our siren and opened the gate for us, we entered and stopped in bewilderment at the sight of a large lake, framed in stone and reflecting the rays of the sun like a polished mirror. In its silence it seemed



dead or sleeping. No fish broke the glassy surface; no birds touched it with their feathered breasts.

Memory once more assumed her sway over me and bore me on her magic carpet to the shores of Black Lake in Siberia, which lay before me in the blaze of the sun's bright shafts of light and was also framed in a white band—of evaporated salt. Standing before the silent and motionless sheen of the surface one is afraid the specter of forgetfulness or death may be imprisoned there. A dead silence holds everything around in its grip, the silence of death or of agony, of some dumb curse or of non-existence; and suddenly out of it a voice, from far away a long-drawn, uncanny call to nothingness, to the brink of a bottomless precipice. My eyes searched the distance for the creator of these sounds that had such power to travel far and waken fright. For a long time I could not find their source, but finally I made out, on the naked crag of a towering gray mountain, the dark silhouette of a wolf, which stood with raised head and straining neck, howling hopelessly, dully and in despair. . . .

"This is the palace pavilion," said Monsieur Delarue, snapping the train of my Siberian thoughts. The pavilion was small, of two stories, with colored glass windows and a broad terrace extending out and dominating the tragically silent lake. Near by, between the emerald-green pomegranate-trees with their reddish-golden fruit, two dark cypresses towered over all and emphasized the sepulchral character of the scene.

What occurred here? For whose solitary life was all this prepared? Who was it that dreamed, suffered, loved or hated here? The literature on the region is unsatis-

factory, stating only that Menar already existed in the seventeenth century and that the pavilion was built by order of Sultan Abd er-Rahman. But this was no answer to my thoughts and queries, which found satisfaction only in the tale brought me through my accidental friendship with one Ali ben Hassan. How much of it had its foundation in fact and how much was the creation of the fancy of my genial friend I have no way of knowing; yet I found it so satisfying that I give it in the same spirit in which it came from him.

"No one knows the exact truth about Menar and this forsaken pavilion, but a legend exists among sad and lonely women, which runs thus: The Grand Vizier of the terrible Mulay Ismail brought him from France gifts from the powerful king, Louis XIV, and something which proved to be more dear and more cherished than all the rest. This was the picture of the King's daughter, a beautiful woman who had lost her husband. When Mulay Ismail saw the beauty of the princess, he sprang into the saddle and coursed the plains, where only bushes and trees knew him that day. Returning to the palace at evening, he summoned the vizier and commanded him:

"To you and to you only will my words be spoken, and no other living man is to know them. You are to go to the capital of France and to ask for the hand of the princess, who is like unto the morning star, the messenger of Allah. Do you understand?"

"You have spoken, oh my Lord!"

"When the Grand Vizier returned from France, he was immediately closeted with the sultan in the most secret room of the palace and reported:

"The answer given to your request, conferring such honor upon France, was evasive."

"And what said the princess, when she heard my wishes?"

"She raised to me her eyes, as beautiful as two stars, and looked at me for a long time in silence. Afterwards one of her ladies-in-waiting, laughing and alluring, came to me and whispered that the beautiful Princess Conti would consent to be your wife when you would erect for her in Maghreb a replica of one of the palaces at Versailles. I ordered a plan of this palace to be made and have brought it to my Lord."

"You are wise, faithful and devoted. Show it to me."

"It was not many days thereafter before thousands of slaves were already digging out the lake, artisans were building the pavilion and other slaves bringing great trees from the Atlas, from the neighborhood of Meknes and Fez and from the forests of Mamora and Shiadma to plant about it. The sultan himself directed the work and, seeing it advancing quickly, he looked upon the picture of the beautiful woman from the kingly house of France and whispered:

"Soon, it will be soon, thou Morning Star, upon whom the grace of Allah has fallen!"

"Then near Marrakesh grew up a corner of Versailles with a palace set among cool trees and pampered lawns, upon which the glaciers of the Atlas looked down with astonishment. A flock of swans dotted the lake with their white plumage, and scores of brightly dressed serving-folk ran everywhere.

"The Grand Vizier journeyed to Paris to conduct the

Princess Conti back to the foot of the sky-challenging ranges of snow and the palace beside the lovely lake. Meanwhile the sultan awaited his would-be-bride in his Marrakesh palace, where he filled his impatient hours with watching fights between lions or tigers and the strongest of his slaves armed only with curved *kumias*. One night a messenger brought to the sultan a script from his Grand Vizier in which his representative made it known to him that the Princess Conti had deigned to mock the great monarch. For the first time in his life the white spot on the Sultan's cheek turned as black as a piece of coal. He gave a knife-thrust at the messenger who could dare to bring him such tidings, jumped on his horse and rode for the mountains. For five days no one saw, or at least lived to tell of having seen, Mulay Ismail, for he killed every man he met upon his way.

"When the vizier arrived during these days of the sultan's absence, he immediately set out and finally found his master through discovering his horse outside a mountain cave. After they had talked long within the cavern's fastnesses, the sultan returned to Marrakesh and ordered two mourning cypresses planted near the pavilion on the bank of the lake as above a tomb, the tomb of his flouted love. He never went again to Menar, where the park was soon overrun by grass and weeds, the walls began to crumble and the palace ultimately fell in ruins, the swans flew away or died and men feared to enter the accursed grounds.

"After the death of Mulay Ismail other sultans partly reconstructed Menar, Abd er-Rahman finishing the work. Yet over it all the two black cypresses ever stood out as

mourners for the flouted love of the despot. Ah, sir, what would have happened if the anger and despair of the sultan had not been appeased by his Grand Vizier finding for him the beautiful and gentle Lalla Aziza, the Morning Sun of his life, who knew how to speak to the heart and soul of the cruel monarch as to an equal? The lake of Menar would not have held the blood that would have been shed; but with her coming the heart of the master knew appeasement and sometimes even mercy."

All this was told me and was firmly believed by the passionate young Ali ben Hassan, whom I accidentally met in Marrakesh and from whom I heard much more of the legend and life of the people.

It was the evening following our visit to Menar that Ali came to me and rather apologetically proposed a walk through the town.

"But do not think, please, that I seek to gain money from you, for I only want to show you some features of the city which you would otherwise never see."

With once more a native who spoke fluent French for a guide I felt fortunate and prepared for some interesting experiences. As we set out and soon lost ourselves in the narrow streets, the night was dark, in fact quite black, mild and gently caressing. Under occasional street lamps crowds of men sauntered in the idle pleasure of evening or strode past on some belated business, with the shoes of their mules or donkeys clattering on the stones or the padded feet of their camels mushing mysteriously along.

Crossing the Jemaa el-Fna, habitat of market vendors and snake-charmers, we penetrated the labyrinth of the narrow streets of the Medina and made our way to an

inn where Ali informed me I could buy a bournous and babooshes to win me entrance where my European costume could not go. As soon as we had entered the court of the inn, Ali helped me to pick out a very good bournous of fine wool, a yellow robe such as is usually worn under the mantle, an old velvet belt and a mountaineer's knife, or rather poignard, with a long, straight blade. We ordered some coffee and grapes and feasted the owner of the inn, who was a bit worried by my transformation. As we passed out of the innkeeper's room into the court, no one paid any attention to me, for I had become but one drop in the sea of Berbers. With my European clothes entirely hidden by the yellow robe and the folds of the bournous and with the cowl thrown over my head, I was not too unlike the natives around us, inasmuch as I am naturally dark and had been burned nut-brown by the sun and wind during our trip from Oran.

Once in the court, Ali ordered a table and cushions and some coffee, which gave me the opportunity to look around and observe that this was not an ordinary *fonduk* with its incessant stream of camels and donkeys, their drivers and caravan leaders, beggars, petty merchants and smiths. Here it was otherwise, for instead of the ordinary crowd and bustle of a caravanserai we found the patrons of this *fonduk* sitting about in separate and quite distinct groups, eyeing one another with badly concealed hostility. Just near us sat a tall Berber, as thin and smoky-looking as a dried herring, who, to add dramatic interest to his part, stroked and fondled a cat with an adorable family of kittens that tumbled about in his lap, while a goat rubbed against his side. He was expounding

something to the youths who surrounded him and who were apparently listening in rapt attention.

"*Ja Sidi Heddi* (In the name of Sidi Heddi)," frequently punctuated the words of the tall Berber, as he preached with very evident earnestness and conviction.

"He is a messenger of the Haddawa sect, who is preaching to win members for this fraternity. These Haddawas never marry, wander continually from place to place, are great collectors and carriers of news and gossip, smoke *kif*, a sort of hashish, are ardent lovers of cats and almost always have a goat as a companion in their travels. The sultans and Mahdis make use of these men for the rapid dissemination of news throughout the country, be it a proclamation of war, a revolt or a great pilgrimage to Mecca. This sect, founded by Sidi Heddi of the Beni Arus tribe, is held in contempt and dislike by the mullahs of the mosque . . . But see, a quarrel is brewing."

Over in another group an old man with a gray beard had risen to his feet and was gesticulating and delivering himself of a strong tirade against the heretical Berber. Ali bent close and whispered:

"He is the *mcokkhadcm* of another sect, the Derkawa, the most numerous and independent of all the religious fraternities and possessing not only their chapels in Morocco, where their members gather for prayer and deliberation, but also their mosques in Mecca and Medina."

One of the statements of my companion to the effect that the Haddawas were used for political purposes aroused my curiosity and my determination to burrow into the matter in detail. The opportunity to do this soon

came to me and revealed some rather interesting facts. Shortly after the introduction of Islam into Morocco by the bloody Sidi Okba ben Nafi there sprang up some heretic sects, a fact which is easily explained by the ethnical differences in the tribes, by the presence of pagan, Jewish and Christian influences, by the acceptance and currency of various religious rituals like that of the Indian mystics and, especially, by the reverence felt for the local prophets and saints, who came to hold as high a place in the admiration and respect of the people as did Mahomet himself. Finally the whole population broke up into various fraternities and sects, having each its own *zaouias* and tombs of its revered saints and acknowledging the governmental power of its living Marabouts.

These fraternities have become very numerous. Some are persecuted, while others, such as the Tijania group, are liked and favored at the sultan's court. Some among them are very strange, as, for example, those founded by the patron saints of the camel-drivers and brick-kiln workers, or, as a further instance, by Sidi ou Musa, who is looked up to as the patron of jugglers, snake-charmers and dancers. The sultans have had many troubles with these various groups, which have often revolted and intrigued against the dynasty. On the other hand the monarchs have frequently made use of this disaccord between the sects, while the French authorities in Algeria and Morocco often feel the influence of these irregular religious organizations throughout the territories—currents which are often hostile and difficult to deal with. Though the name "fraternity" is in accepted use, I feel that they should rather be designated by the word "sect," as each



of them believes basically in Islam and simply adds its own modifications or restrictions.

There in the court of the inn, as Ali whispered to me something of all this, the quarrel developed hot and violent, as religious quarrels are apt to do. The dispute became so passionate that the thin Haddawa began to jump and whirl around, until finally he raised his thin hand and shouted:

"*Ama el-Hakk* (I am Truth)!" by which words the tall fanatic declared himself to be God. A hush fell on the whole court, and after a moment the natives, covering their faces with their bournouses, pressed together in one corner of the courtyard and engaged in earnest deliberation.

"Let us go," whispered Ali, "for knives will soon be coming into play."

Not anxious to have to try the temper of my new blade so soon, I willingly left this *fonduk* where these men of warring sects had gathered by accident or intent.

At a short distance down the street Ali stopped and knocked at the door of a small inn, or rather a house of furnished rooms, if one agrees to accept as furniture a dirty carpet with two greasy cushions thrown in. Several rooms of this ilk opened on the four sides of a paved court with a tree in the center of it. We made a round of these dens and saw that their inhabitants were for the most part sorcerers, who were busy making talismans of every description. Each had his whole laboratory in one of these small places, where herbs, the bark of different trees, henna, the gall of birds, bats and cats, the dried hearts and eyes of jackals, cats and cocks, wisps of hair,

bones, feathers of birds, the skin of different animals, fragments of colored glass and stone filled corners and shelves in motley array.

One of these peculiar craftsmen wrote something on bits of skin or paper, wrapped and tied them round diminutive packets with a mysterious knot, whispered incantations and took care to see that his assistant, who was dumb, did not interrupt him in the course of turning out one of these precious bundles. When we were told the composition of some of these amulets, I recalled the strange recipes given by Pliny in his Natural History and I realized at once that nothing had changed in this realm since the time of the great scientist. I observed that the talismans and the signs inscribed upon them closely resembled those which I had seen in the "land of demons," Mongolia and Djungaria. I would not go so far as to say that they had come to Maghreb from the prairies and mountains of Asia, but I have a feeling that all these talismans are of the same extraction and are older than Mongolia and Berbers, that is, that they came from Assyria, India, Egypt or, perhaps, even from Atlantis.

In one of the rooms in this court of the sorcerers Ali showed me a great artist, who was seated on the floor near a little table, bending over a small, smoking oil-lamp and painting with diminutive brushes the script of holy verses from the Koran in a little parchment book, bound in beautiful leather, illuminating the text with the brilliant colors of the ancient Arabian manuscripts. He worked with enthusiasm and devotion, forgetting everything else, though the hour was late and an untouched bowl of quite cold *kouskous* stood at his side.

Returning to the street after our visit to this most unusual of factories, we were interrupted in our discussion of it by the sight of a fleeing native, running as though his life depended upon it. Nor was the figure wrong, for he was followed after a very short interval by a second, carrying a knife and pressing hard the pursuit, which continued in a grim, ominous silence until the trail took them from our sight.

"A blood-revenge," was all that 'Ali said, as he shrugged his shoulders.

I understood then more clearly the place of the poignard in an ordinary costume and returned to the hotel after midnight, feeling a little of the friendship and confidence which this element of my disguise instilled.

## CHAPTER XIX

### AS WOMEN LIVE AND MEN DINE IN MAGHREB

THE following morning I was wakened very early and told that a man was awaiting me on the terrace. Dressing hurriedly, I went below to find a grave, sedate Arab, who greeted me eloquently in French and ended his formal salutation with an inquiry as to whether I would consent to visit with him the pantheon of the Saadite dynasty, which he described as the most romantic spot in Marrakesh and a memorial of ancient times that would make a deep impression upon me. Of course, I readily assented and, after taking coffee with my unusual guest, went with him into the town.

On our way my new friend told me much of Marrakesh and of the tribes living in the High Atlas. As Abu Abd es-Selam el-Magiri proved to be a learned man of deep reading, I profited much by this chance acquaintance and listened with rapt interest to his statement that Marrakesh possesses a soul that has come down through many lives, that she has collected here many diverse beliefs and creeds from far-away Senegal and northern Africa and that every stone, every rampart whispers infinite tales to those whose ears are attuned. The spirits of masters and

wise men still wander here, figures in that history which has not yet been finished, but rather interrupted in the midst of the record, and is waiting for a chronicler who shall remove the dust from the ancient book and begin a new page.

Once my learned cicerone had led me within the walls of the neglected and depressing *kasba* of the Saadite dynasty, he showed further depth of feeling in his words:

"Sir, we are on the hallowed ground that has received the ashes of the great Saadite emirs, among them those of Ahmed the Golden, the conqueror of Timbuktu, the Sudan and Senegal. A curse followed this noble family, so that one of them rarely died a natural death. In blood and revenge they wandered this earth, ever the prey of disasters and crime. The anathema which had been pronounced by a vengeful *kahina* upon one of their distant ancestors followed them to their graves and only died with the last of the rulers. With the passing of power over Maghreb from their hands to those of the Alawites this place was walled in, and nobody ever dared to disturb the rest of the spirits—no one, as the new king feared the curse and strove to blot out even the memory of these earlier rulers, which ever lived in the grateful hearts of the men from the Atlas.

"But they did not succeed in that; for among the Draa tribe of mountaineers there were still families descended from the oldest Berbers, or Mesmudas, who knew that the mausoleum had already existed for three centuries. Some among them dug a branch from a nearby-by subterranean channel through which they passed under and into the *kasba*, thus enabling their most respected Marabouts

to visit the tomb of their ancient masters before the feast of Bairam. In the Atlas there still exist families related to the *sherifs* of the Saadite dynasty, the youths from which continue to come to these sacred shrines of their ancestors and to fortify here their spirits."

As we entered the pantheon, shrouded deep in the veil of sadness and neglect, involuntarily I spoke aloud my thoughts to my Arab friend:

"One feels like offering prayers for the dead."

"God is One!" he whispered, as he bent his head.

Later, as we parted outside the entrance gate, once more Abu Abd es-Selam dropped his head and half spoke, half murmured, as though in apology for his show of feeling:

"The ashes of my forefathers rest here."

Throughout the whole day I was so dominated by the depressing feeling left by this strange place that I failed to take my usual pleasure from the dinner in the cool and attractive garden of the rich Arabian merchant from Fez, Si Mahommed ben Chokrun, to which we had been invited through Monsieur Delarue. And yet this dinner was splendid, served, as it was, in the shadow of fruit-trees in the garden, where the grass was covered with beautiful rugs and the many-cushioned divans which had been arranged for us. First, low tables with copper basins were set before us, and black slaves, silent and attentive, poured us water to wash our hands. Then we took our places on the comfortable, soft cushions, though again, strange as it seemed to us not of the Moslem world, not by the side of the host, who remained apart and, with eyes alert for everything, directed a whole company of

serving slaves by the simplest sign of his hand. As he did not understand French, he conversed with us through Monsieur Delarue.

The dinner was excellent and gave me one more proof that the Moorish cuisine is distinguished by refinement and good taste. We were served pigeons cooked in oil with maize and other vegetables, boiled mutton with beans and olives, roast mutton with a sweet purée of squash, fried chicken, the ever-present *kouskous*, green peppers with an almond sauce and, as dessert, pomegranates.

After the slaves had cleared the tables and had brought us once more water for washing our hands, there followed the traditional tea with mint, which was prepared by the eldest son of the host, a pale, thin youth, very modest and well bred. Monsieur Delarue told us that the young man was a cause of great sadness in the life of his parents, as he was not attracted by the most beautiful of women and would not marry.

"A month ago," explained our host, "I found for him a slave with a beauty that far surpassed anything I could have believed was of this earth, and yet he would not even look at her but sent her off to the women's quarters without ado. Evidently it is not the wish of Allah, Whose Name be praised!"

While we drank our tea, the host and his son went off to eat their dinner with the men of the house, leaving one of his cousins to act for him. The etiquette and general features of this dinner were quite the same as those of the one described by my wife, as the customs are practically identical throughout all Maghreb. Here also we

ate with the thumb and two fingers of the right hand, dipping pieces of bread or meat into the gravies and sauces to fish out the vegetables.

During the meal I explained to our companions that the manner of eating in Mongolia resembles that of Maghreb, save that it was even more direct and energetic. There they serve a whole sheep or immense lumps of cooked meat, upon which every one throws himself with a great, heavy knife, cutting off chunks of the meat and breaking the bones. During a feast the hostess moves around the circle and carefully observes the hands of the guests. If the fat runs down from these and off the elbows, then she is satisfied that her food is being appreciated. At an Arab meal one can well wear a dinner-jacket, given a bit of caution and deftness; but for a Mongolian feast the best costume were "naked to the waist," as the prevailing fashion in the country of Jenghiz Khan dictates that a diner should be covered with grease from the mouth to the belt to be certain of paying the proper compliment to his amiable hostess. At a "real social success" a man's companions, if they be also good trencher-men, will assist in bespattering him from the sides and from behind. Naturally no one wears "a smoking" in Mongolia, as a costume there after only a fraction of a social season becomes so encrusted that it is best suited for the manufacture of soap or the trying out of fat for other purposes.

It is very easy to understand that following such a plentiful dinner as the one given us by Si Mahommed ben Chokrun we had little desire to walk much and that, consequently, after strolling through the beautiful garden or,



rather, the small forest of fruit-trees and date-palms, we accepted with pleasure the invitation of our host to rest in a half-darkened, cool room off one of the courts.

Meanwhile my wife was invited to visit the harem and went off with Madame Ducore and the host, full of enthusiasm for this peep into another world. As we reclined on the soft cushions, smoked and chatted, I finally dozed off for a moment, to be aroused by the distant strains of a violin. I had no doubt but that it was my wife playing, as I recognized her technique, though I could hear that only two strings were being used and consequently concluded that she must be playing on an Arab instrument. First there came some of the melodies which she had collected in Spain, Andalusian and Gipsy songs, and then others picked up in Tlemsen. I dozed again and slept a full hour, which was good for me after mutton with beans and squash and the rich *kouskous* and other tasty but very filling dishes. When my wife returned, we thanked our host and went back to the hotel, where Zofiette immediately sat down and wrote in her journal the impressions of her visit. I leave it to her to describe the part of the house which we men were not allowed to enter.

"Today we were invited to a midday dinner with a rich Arab in his suburban villa. The luncheon was served in the shade of the olives, where we were given places on soft cushions before beautifully inlaid low tables. The sky was a deep, rich blue and seemed to hang very low over the sun-bathed Geelliz mountains. After a very delicious and hearty meal the host invited Madame Ducore and me to visit the harem with him, a chance which I eagerly accepted.

"We entered through a patio, with the customary marble fountain in the center, located well back in the serai, which was really only the temporary summer residence of our host. Coal-black, ugly Negro slaves with great thick lips and tight-curved hair awaited us on the steps of the terrace. As they raised a thin silk curtain, we entered a large room whose only light came in through two small windows with colored panes well up toward the ceiling and gave to the place a mysterious air of blending purple and orange hues. The intoxicating fragrance of rose, almond and jasmine mingled with the aroma of the cedar to give the atmosphere a quality appropriate to what we are wont to associate with the exclusive seraglio. As we were left alone to take our places on the comfortable, low divans, I had the impression that I had been borne off somewhere to live out one of my dreams.

"We were allowed to rest by ourselves for half an hour before any of the women of the harem appeared, each one entering alone, as though arriving thus to make a more distinct and greater impression. There were the two wives of our host, his three daughters and the wife of the younger son. All were overdressed, rouged and painted, with eyes elongated and blackened with kohl, with signs tattooed on cheek, chin and brow and with hair and hands dyed with henna. Their jewels were rich and numerous, counting immense gold chains, armlets and ankle bands, immense medallion-talismans, the so-called "hand of Fatma," great circular earrings set with rubies, emeralds, sapphires and garnets and massive bands around the head and forehead, adorned with pendants. Their hair was

thick, almost orange-colored through the use of henna and plaited in small braids.

"As I observed them more closely, I noticed that they all had on several robes and, turning to Madame Ducore to satisfy my curiosity, I learned that the women in wealthy families usually wear seven such garments, one over the other—and this in Africa! Unhappy the husband who may happen to possess four wives and may be compelled to buy twenty-eight new dresses all at once, and fifty-six just to allow them a change of garment!

"These harem ladies, who had seen very little of European women, began gradually to get accustomed to us and could not hide their curiosity and their desire to question us. As we were nothing loath, the catechism began.

" 'Is Lalla married and does she love her husband? Has she children and how many? . . . How old are they? Has she many slaves? . . . Does she go out alone in the street? Can she prepare *kouskous*? . . . Has her husband other wives and how many? From what kind of sheep has she wool? What kind of grapes does she like best? How much tea with mint and Moorish coffee can she drink? Has she ever drunk champagne? . . . Why doesn't she use henna and kohl, which would make her much more beautiful? Why has she such short dresses and why is she so lightly clad under them? Evidently her husband must be very close-fisted. . . . Why is she wearing no jewels? Did she receive no dowry or trousseau? . . . Is she not ashamed to go into the streets without a veil? . . . '

"We replied to all these very patiently and indulgently, Madame Ducore speaking for me and for herself. In the meantime I watched them very closely. Both the wives of Mahommed were beautiful, especially the younger, who could not have been over sixteen years old. She had lovely, dreamy eyes, a small nose, teeth like pearls, a long neck and was exceedingly graceful in spite of her outfit of heavy robes; but I remarked that she was quite wild and soon learned that she was a woman from the Sous country, whose beauties are most prized. The older one, whom I took to be around thirty-five, had the appearance of a mild, good woman, was always smiling pleasantly and seemed to me to be more cultured than the others. She was from the Caucasus—probably bought and brought here as a slave—and had blue eyes, hair almost blonde and a much fairer complexion than the other women.

"Having, after some time, become accustomed to us, she ordered a slave to bring in her children, whom we found to be of quite another appearance, unlike that of either herself or Mohammed ben Chokrun. There were three of them, girls of ten, twelve and fourteen, and all very close to the Senegal type, with their kinky hair and their almost black skins. Seeing our badly suppressed astonishment, the senior wife, slightly confused, explained at great pains and at some length that, whenever the time for the birth of a child is approaching, she eats nothing and drinks only coffee, which is the reason for all of her children being so dark!

"At this point the eldest son of our host came in, he with the heart of stone. The youth proved, however, to

have a love of music and went away to bring his violin, very patently desirous of exhibiting his skill before foreigners. The violin was a rather good one but had only two strings, tuned very low, and a bow that showed hard usage and was so curved that it did not promise much artistic delight. The African musician plays with the violin resting vertically on the knee in the same upright position that we play the 'cello, which changes the character of the sound and creates very definite difficulties of technique. At our request for some of his music the boy sat down on a low cushion and began to play, often out of key, a protracted, mournful melody, greatly overcharged with floriture and very long.

"Madame Ducore, knowing my fondness for the violin, asked me in turn to play something for them. Consequently, when the young man had finished, I begged of him his instrument, much to the astonishment of the whole assembly, tuned it a quint higher and with great difficulty at first, as the bow was curved and the instrument very strange with its limited equipment of strings, began to improvise some Eastern melodies, knowing that our European music would probably not appeal to them. The result was quite unexpected and astonishing, and they looked at me as though I were a specter from some other world or a mysterious djinn.

"One of the women came close to me and touched my hands and feet, but the most astonished of them all was my fellow-musician, who was surprised by everything he had seen and heard, by the unusual pose, the quick movements of the fingers and the purity of the tone. When I repeated the melody he had just played, harmonizing it

a little better and as well as the two strings permitted, he suddenly gave vent to great emotion, pressed my hands and begged me to give him some instruction, which I gladly promised to do.

"Then they would not let us leave the harem, and I had to play without end. One of the girls fell to dancing and exhibited a very strong feeling for rhythm and real poetry in her movements, especially those of the hands and the shoulders. All of the ladies then gathered close around us, stroking our hair and our faces, which appealed to us as far from agreeable, though we could not but feel that it was the evidence of great sympathy. Slaves brought in tea with mint and quantities of sweets. Once I had emptied my cup, I had to play and play. When I stopped for a moment, there was a violent clapping of hands and such noisy protests that I recalled, in those very different surroundings, the story of a musician who fell into a wolf's den, as he was returning through a forest from a wedding. Beside himself with fright and awaiting certain death, he bethought him of his violin and played with such enchantment that the wolves sat listening around him and forgot to eat him.

"Though my harem ladies were in a way as voracious as the wolves, I was not afraid, for I had already sufficient evidence that they felt kindly toward me. A little later a slave came in to tell us that the gentlemen were waiting for us, so that we had at last to take our leave. The Arab women said good-bye to us with very evident regret and sadness, pressing our hands to their hearts and speaking with sincere feeling. I pitied them, I pity the

young lives shut up in such a cage, though it all seems to have some fascination and charm—of course, when looked at from a distance.”

This same day we attended a second dinner at seven o'clock, which the French officials who had been invited with us assured us would not last more than two hours, and that we should then be able to return to the hotel and rest after so full a day. The invitation had come from two local notables, Si Mahommed Abdessalam el-Wazazi and Si Ali ben Mahommed el-Hassawi, relatives of the local Pasha, the powerful Prince Glawi. One of the French officials told me that both of them were old men, very proud and aristocratic and not given to talking with foreigners and that they were receiving us officially as proxies of the Pasha, who was for the moment in his *kasba* in the mountains. To make sure of my ground and to confirm or shatter the official's statement, I asked him if I might open conversation with them.

“You may try,” he replied, “but you will not succeed, for the two old men will answer simply ‘yes’ or ‘no’ through the interpreter.”

A few minutes past seven we approached a wall near the Jemaa el-Fna and knocked at a small, low and most unpretentious door, which was opened at once by a slave with lantern in hand, who led us along a tunnel-like passage under the house until we came into a beautiful court bordered with black cypresses that seemed aspiring to reach the stars and garnished with flowering shrubs about the murmuring fountain. In a richly furnished room, lighted with all the brilliance of day, we were met

by our two hosts, the elder of whom, a thin, short man with pale face and piercing eyes, welcomed us very solemnly and found us our places.

During the dinner, which was served almost immediately after our arrival, I remarked little that was in any way different from those already described. When tea was finally served, I made my attempt to open conversation with the two *Amphitryons* through the intelligent *thaleb* who was acting as interpreter, but found that the old men really did not wish to talk. So I withdrew from the front line and went into a flanking movement by beginning to tell about the countries I had visited, about meetings and conversations with dignitaries of different cults and about my impressions regarding the various religions. This move broke down all reserve and acted in a magic fashion to make the conversation run smoothly, the more so as the interpreter, who had begun his official duties in a rather perfunctory manner, developed a keen appreciation of what was passing and aided us materially by his added zeal. In a little while formality and distance had been so thoroughly replaced by an intimate interest that the two old men quitted their divans and squatted on rugs with their feet tucked under them. I followed suit, not only to be one with them in all their customs but because, from long experience with men of the outdoors and of the world where chairs are infrequent or unknown, I have a strong desire to get down near the ground when I talk of things that really interest me.

Suddenly the old man with the keen and quizzical eyes asked:



"Is it true that the Bolsheviks are just and good men?"

"Sidi," I answered, "I have seen these men face to face but I shall not speak of my own personal impressions regarding them, in order that I may avoid seeming too strongly prejudiced. I prefer to answer with the words of these 'just men,' who have themselves admitted, even boasted, that they have murdered a million men, among them six thousand *ulema*, one hundred Imams, nine thousand hakims, thirteen thousand of the richest men of their country and three hundred fifty-five thousand *tholba*."

"In the name of Allah, they are wicked men; and why do they praise themselves so loudly here?"

"But perhaps they are 'just,'" I continued. "Let me explain to you now what I should do, if I were a Bolshevik and had power here."

"In the name of the merciful and good God!" whispered one of the old men.

"Here in Maghreb I see walls and walls," I began, watching the curious faces of my hosts. "With these walls you surround your houses, your palm-groves, your gardens, your harems. Why do you do this?"

"We must protect our property," they answered in one voice, raising their arms in a gesture of palpable evidence.

"If I were a Bolshevik and had authority here, I should first of all destroy these walls. Dates, pomegranates, wine and olives would no longer be left to you, who have already too much of wealth, enough to condemn you to death, but would be given to your servants, to your slaves and to the beggars of the streets. With you gone, or if you happen to be left alive in penury, your wives might

easily become the wives of the jugglers of Jemaa el-Fna, of the workers from the *suks*, of my driver or of the black slave who led the way with his lantern into your beautiful court and house, where your ancestors have long striven and builded for their descendants."

"May Allah defend us!" exclaimed the old men, and then fell to whispered consultation between themselves and the interpreter.

Along such lines and through many diverse ways the talk ran on, until it was eleven o'clock before we rose to take our leave. Pressing my hands and afterwards touching their lips with their fingers, they said to me:

"*Enta mesit ou kwalbek khallit* (Leaving us, you leave behind you sorrowing hearts)."

The next morning a slave brought to the hotel two letters, conveying to me in the all-too-flattering terms of Oriental politeness an appreciation of the information I had imparted to our hosts of the previous evening, who quite evidently had some knowledge of the doctrines and propaganda of the Soviets but who possessed far from the whole truth in the matter.

## CHAPTER XX

### A FEUDAL ATLAS TRIBE

THE Commander-in-chief of the Marrakesh district proposed to me a trip into the High Atlas, which I was subsequently informed was looked upon as the pride of the French policy in the country of Mulay Yusuf. One fine morning a military car drew up before the hotel, bringing Captain Deverre of the General Staff, with whom I was to make the journey.

After skirting the walls of the town, pink with the warmth of the morning light, the road shot out across the naked, stony plain, cut in many directions by caravan routes that led away and lost themselves in notches of the most northerly ranges of the mountains. As we sped on, the car overhauled strings of loaded camels, scattered groups of mules and donkeys and frightened villagers on the way to town or nomads wandering from place to place.

From time to time I noticed the crowns of palms protruding from round holes and learned, in answer to my rather astonished inquiry, that Marrakesh would never have been the capital and the city of commerce and pleasure that it now is, had it not been for these holes. They

are shafts leading down to a network of subterranean canals, which in long-forgotten times the sultans had caused to be dug to carry out the plans they had elaborated for furnishing the capital with water. The industrious and skilled natives of the Draa tribe were called upon to excavate numerous trunk-lines of these subterranean canals at a depth where the earth would carry without great wastage the water from the Atlas streams, that were being greedily absorbed by the chalky surface strata of the desert. Besides the principal canals, dug by and belonging to the government, there exists also a whole network of private *foggaras*, which irrigate the plantations and provide some of the branch lines of the town. Somewhere around three hundred sixty of these lesser and greater branches are in use, and for their maintenance and cleaning the officials and planters still employ the Draa natives, who enter the tunnels through these round holes which I had observed. On the plain between Marrakesh and the Atlas the water of the subterranean channels in some places is carried for a short distance along the surface. Here the Moroccans have occasionally impounded the water by dams and have cleverly erected small mills.

I know similar systems of subterranean canalization in China and Persia, but in those countries I never ran across works of such grand dimensions. I have seen but one place in which this skill and spirit of enterprise in the native handling of water has reached a higher point of development, and that is in the oasis of Figig, just on the Moroccan-Algerian border, where the natives work in the earth with the skill of moles and search out

the smallest water-supplies to requisition them for service in their fields and among their palms.

After we had covered about forty miles, we found ourselves winding in among the foot-hills of the first ranges. The contrast with the desert was sudden and most marked, for the earth here, saturated by the water from the snows above, allowed the vegetation to develop itself immediately above the line of the desert. Around the small villages we passed were groves of olive- and fruit-trees together with fields of sorghum and maize. In winding curves the road mounted higher and higher, joining with the others that came up out of the plain to form one of the larger feeders of the great single trunk-route that finally leads up over the Atlas to carry the stream of travel down the other side to Tarudant, Tikirt and the Sudan.

On the summit of the first range we came upon some villages hung on the slope of a ravine, at the bottom of which flowed a shallow, swift mountain stream. Judging from the configuration of the foot-hills, I inferred that it must, of course, be an affluent of the Tensift, which flows near Marrakesh; but I was informed that it disappeared entirely on the plain, seeping down and eventually contributing so much of its water has had not already evaporated to the system of subterranean canals and thus reaching the capital through these strange and unnatural channels. However, toward the end of the rainy period, when the snows and the glaciers in the mountains melt, this river carries such an augmented stream that it breasts the parching heat of the desert and strews its seasonal channel across the plain with

yellow earth and stones, which remain there after the rains to mark its way, when it shall come again in its developed might.

This whole locality around the villages is called Tana-out. Gray and yellow houses with open galleries and with terraces on their roofs clung to the rocky walls and overhung the ravine below like swallows' nests. Small, narrow windows, doors half sunk in the ground, dirty yards, a mosque with a spindly minaret, cattle wandering through the streets, crowds of children, chickens—all this formed a well-known picture such as I have so often seen in the *avouls* of the Caucasus, with their same small groups of houses, narrow streets crawling along the mountainside, dirt and crowds of lazy natives.

With a chauffeur who whirled us around dizzy curves at a sickening speed and with apparent disregard of all caution, we were soon at the summit of the first pass, from where we looked back upon the spot of the Tana-out villages, the range of green hills and, beyond them, the dead, reddish-gray plain that floored the valley across to the wall of the Jebilet range, glimmering on the horizon. Directly in front of these mountains lay the little dot which we knew to be the oasis of Marrakesh, and, straining my sight, I could just make out the minaret of the Kutubia mosque.

To the south quite another landscape—a narrow valley, widening as it dropped, led down to the plain between the two high ranges of the mountain, which there overtowered the narrow silvery trail of a river. Small houses were scattered about the upper valley, carrying with them their checker-boards of fields, across which

men could be seen drawing the slow and patient lines of the plough. Farther on flocks of sheep were browsing, and over against the mountainside a big village with a mosque, a minaret and a green-roofed *kubba* nestled in distant tranquillity.

"That is the town of Mulay Brahim to which crowds of the pious make pilgrimages every year to visit the *kubba* of this *wali*," explained Captain Deverre. "It is the most frequented place for the tribes of all the Atlas, so much so that a *hadj* from anywhere in these regions is supposed to visit this shrine several times before starting on the road to Mecca."

As we pointed downward and twisted like an eel in among the mountain rocks and along the breakneck road that at times overhung sheer drops of hundreds of feet we met or passed many of these pilgrims of the Faith coming from or going toward the sacred town. At times they would break their Indian file and stop near some tree to offer sacrifice to the spirit inhabiting it. Rags, bits of yarn or gaudy-colored strips of cloth were the offerings which again carried me back to the open country in Asia, where I had myself placed such tribute on hundreds of trees—shreds from the lining of my jacket or hair from the mane of my Bielak, the faithful companion who carried me from Amyl to Narabanchi Kuré. I used to make such offerings, not because I believed in the demons of the holy trees but in order to avoid stirring up the devil that was more certainly resident in the heart of my Mongol guide.

When we had dropped down to the bottom of the narrow valley and were running between olive-groves, green

fields and pasturing herds, we came suddenly upon some workings in reddish earth with rectangular basins, or reservoirs, full of water. It was a saltern, in which natives were carrying water in buckets made of goatskin and emptying it in the uppermost basin. There, we found, they left it until evaporation began, when they drew it off into a lower reservoir, allowed it to remain in this for a time and thus carried it down through several levels, until they brought the very heavy solution to the lowest tank, where they left it to form the salt crystals. From this last they shoveled it out to dry in piles.

On our way up the ascent of the second range we passed two *kasbas* that were real fortresses with thick walls, watch-towers, narrow slits of windows, loopholes and powerful gates. They were perched on the summits of solitary hills, where they were difficult to attack and offered the defenders every advantage in repulsing an enemy. The population of each of these *kasbas* forms a commune, which is governed by an elected caid or, quite as often, by a Marabout.

This locality we were passing is known as Asni, is very rich but has not been thoroughly explored. The *kasbas* were surrounded by groves of olives, almonds and fruit-trees, while everywhere about the country I saw cultivated fields, vineyards, excellent pastures and an abundance of water in the streams flowing from the mountains. Further up, the slopes were covered with oaks and sandaracs and above the timber-line were faced with bare, gleaming rocks, reaching up under the snows that capped their summits.

Here in this region I saw immense varan, or lizards,



of the largest size found in these latitudes. Herodotus called this species "earth crocodiles." Those that I ran across were over three feet in length, with long necks and with the strong legs and feet that give to this type a speed of locomotion above the average in the species. Scared by the roar of the car, they made off very quickly, slashing about with their strong tails, which they use in attack or defense with the power and precision of a whip.

About six miles beyond Asni we met a group of mountaineers trekking toward Marrakesh with panniers of charcoal laden on donkeys.

"Do you realize," said the Captain, "that these men will receive about five francs apiece for their charcoal? And they trudge for five or six days to make the journey of a hundred miles there and back, just for five francs. It is evidently the hereditary nomad blood, calling for a change of scene, that makes the native so fond of such trips."

In the bed of a river we were crossing I found some bits of rock-crystal that made me curious and sent me prospecting up the stream, which had its source above among the broken and jagged rocks that were picturesquely colored in yellows and reds. As I searched, I found in the stream-bed a large number of beautiful pieces of onyx, agate, quartz and bits of green copper ore. If a Siberian or Canadian gold prospector found himself in this region, he would certainly investigate carefully the bed of this stream, into which ran numerous little affluents that carried down broken bits of quartz from the colored rocks, which, as far as I could judge from the few samples I found, were conglomerates.

While I was looking about I flushed a flock of partridges and scared up something else in the brush that made off with so much noise that I inferred it must have been a boar.

A little farther on we stopped for a few moments to feast our eyes on a beautiful panorama which lay spread before us. The mountains parted here, forming a great valley down which the road wound to Tagadirt el-Bour, that lay hidden from us by an intervening forest of sandaracs. The mountain tops were bathed with light-suffused fog and lighter sunny mists. Above us stretched skyward the highest summits of the Atlas with snow in the crevices and on their northern slopes. In the great, sweeping circle formed by these rugged crags I was told that one might readily come upon a panther hunting mountain-sheep.

"We are now well up in the real High Atlas," Captain Deverre observed.

As he spoke, I recalled and discussed with him some of the facts communicated to me by Monsieur Orthlieb, the French political administrator for this district. From time immemorial this expanse of mountains has been divided between three powerful, feudal princely families, the Glawi, Gundafi and Mtugi, which have often fought with the sultans and which were related to both the Almoravide and Saadite dynasties. They are the so-called "Masters of the Mountains," or the great caids, with whom even the sultans do not like to meddle but ever strive to maintain the best relations. The rulers of Rabat and Fez had always to remember that, at the first sign from these Masters of the Mountains, the mountaineers

from the shores of the Atlantic to the easternmost branches of the Atlas would rise—the Haha, Sous, Draa and Shlu tribes—and with them the peoples camping behind the Anti Atlas, those mixed Arabs and Berbers who also carry strains of the peoples from the Sahara.

When the French came into Morocco they met at first hostility and constant intrigue on the part of the great caids but finally arrived at an understanding with them, leaving undisturbed their feudal organization, dating from as far back as the thirteenth century, their laws and their established traditions. It is, in fact, a state within the state of the sultan, or, more correctly, three states within the Moroccan territory; but, instead of indulging in civil strife, this political combination has become a guarantor of peace in southwestern Morocco. The French, on the one hand, vouched for the sultan's recognition of the feudal laws and relationships and, on the other, assisted the ruler in coming to an arrangement with the mountain tribes for the payment of tribute and the furnishing of warriors. But the great caids know, however, that the first instance of disobedience or revolt would be sufficient for the sultan to declare them enemies and to bring French armies from Marrakesh and the Atlantic ports, which would ultimately drive them from their strongholds and deprive them of their special laws and their governing authority. Consequently the caids vie with one another in their administrative control of their warlike mountaineers as well as in the application of certain features of European science to their civic problems. In no part of French Morocco is it so safe as in the High Atlas, where no French military outposts

exist and where a woman or a child can travel without fear of molestation. The Masters of the Mountains, through their severe tribunals, see to it that the peace and security of the countryside is not violated. Once during an observation on the apparent abnormality of this condition in the Atlas, one of the French made the remark:

"If the great caids had not been there we should have had to invent them."

The Sous mountaineers, with their capital at Tarudant, are the most numerous and the most warlike of the mountain tribes. They do not belong to any one of the three principal branches of the Berber race, Mesmudas, Zenatas nor Senhadjas; they speak a Shlu jargon, have a light, olive complexion with little hair on their faces and usually possess agile, flexible bodies. Past-masters that they are in fighting with knives, their curved *kumia* becomes a terrible arm in their hands. Before the Almoravides and during the period of the civil wars the men of this tribe were robbers and picked their prey along the caravan routes leading from Central Africa into Morocco.

In their legends they preserve memories of the time when their ancestors held the whole country up to the very shores of the Mediterranean, until, repulsed by invaders, who were probably Vandals or Normans, they were forced to retreat southward. Their legends also affirm that on their retreat they could not carry all their treasure with them and consequently hid it in various places between the Mediterranean and the river Regreg, especially in the forest of Mamora. It is even claimed that certain of their Marabouts still guard ancient pieces of leather and copper tablets which carry the plans of

the places where the hidden treasures lie. The reputation of the Sous as the most skilled among treasure-hunters may have something to do with the fact that they lost their own wealth and have long continued the search for it. An old Spanish merchant told me that at certain times almost all of the able-bodied men of the tribe trekked north to hunt for these caches which their ancestors made. In any case it is a fact that many ancient objects have been found by these Sous in the ruins of the old Roman towns.

When the great caids with fire and sword established their authority throughout the Atlas, the golden days of freebooting for the Sous came to an end. They could no longer attack with impunity the caravans of the merchants transporting goods and running slaves from the Sudan and Senegal to Fez, Tangier and Meknes. The caids protected these merchants, requiring from them and even from the sultan, in the manner of the old Baltic barons, a heavy fee and saw to it that any robbing of them that was to be permitted should be legalized and for their benefit alone.

Through this change the Sous, after being accustomed to the free and open life of highway brigands and of wandering far in search of finer booty, were compelled to settle down and become agriculturalists. But this was not in their blood, and it was real tragedy that fell upon the tribe, when misery and hunger stalked the villages. They had but little land and no liking for clearing the forests to make more. This struggle with nature on the mountain slopes was no life for a freebooter.

So the men began to emigrate. Who does not know

the "*bakjal Sousi*" of the Moroccan towns, sellers of dried fruits and aromatic herbs? Others, especially those belonging to the religious sect of the great Marabout, Musa es-Semlali, wander throughout all Morocco and Algeria as acrobats and jugglers. They likewise band themselves together and go much farther afield, as laborers to Europe and even to America, where they readily take on the external features of the different culture but never abandon their Islamic faith and save penny after penny to bring them back to the mountains of their warlike ancestors, where the mysterious tablets with the plans of buried treasure are preserved, together with the greatest treasure of all, the most beautiful women in Morocco. I have seen them, lithe, proud and bold. With their attractive mouths and arresting eyes they reminded me of the mountain women in the Caucasus, those fiery she-eagles of Imeritia and Georgia. It is consequently not strange that it should be the dream of rich men of Fez and Marrakesh to possess such women nor that these girls of the Sous, either captured or bought, often reach high honors in the harems of the Masters of the Mountains, of the pashas or even of the sultans.

I remember having seen once an epitomized presentation of a drama of the Sous mountains. It was in one of the small oases grouped around picturesque Biskra. I was there on Monday, the market day, when the natives came in from the neighboring villages and camps to sell sheep and wool and to purchase in return cloth, tea and sugar. Groups of them with their donkeys had gathered in the small *kisaria*, where everything was in a flux of movement, as the merchants inspected sheep and

bags of wool. Suddenly a commotion started and a crowd began collecting about an open space, in the center of which a man with a fair, olive complexion stood out conspicuously among the darker, almost black nomads from the desert.

"It is the Sous, Abd er-Rbi'a," was heard passed on from mouth to mouth. The man was fixing some short staves in the ground, seven of them in all. Then he made a formal harangue and, throwing aside his dark-blue bournous, drew from his belt seven *kumias*, as curved as sickles. With great skill he threw them at the boards with such force that the blades sank into the wood or split the staves and fell to the ground. As the circle pressed forward to toss their coins into his basket, Er-Rbi'a went up close to one woman after another in his audience, looked searchingly into her eyes and asked in a whisper:

"Are you Aksa? . . . Are you from the land of the Sous and were you the wife of Abd er-Rbi'a? . . ."

The women only laughed, the crowd laughed, and the mad mountaineer pressed his head between his thin hands and cried in despair:

"Again I have not found her. Where are you, delight of my eyes? Where are you, Aksa, the pride of unhappy Er-Rbi'a?"

The crowd only laughed the louder, and one of the onlookers, a stout Arab merchant, pulled at the bournous of the mountaineer and asked him whom he was seeking.

"My wife, the beautiful Aksa, whom they took from me ten years ago when I went to search for treasure in Mamora."

"So long ago?" laughed the merchant. "Aksa has had

time to grow old. Better look for a young girl here among our women."

Once more the crowd shouted with laughter and bantered him with jokes and gibes. Er-Rbi'a stood silent in their midst, waited for calm to return and then answered in serious tones:

"I don't want your women. They are slaves, timid, cringing and thoughtless. They fade like flowers in the sun."

"And yours from the mountains, are they better?"

"The women of the Sous are the daughters of kings. When they grace one with their regard, happiness sings in the heart; when they love a man, to him is given the paradise of Allah on earth."

Er-Rbi'a spoke his last words sadly and, looking off into the distance where the contours of low-lying mountains, the last outposts of the Atlas, showed above the hazy dust-clouds of the desert, wrapped himself in his bournous and went away to dream and continue his search.

Such is the Sous land and such is the fate of their beautiful women and of their men who follow their old instinct for roaming the earth. It would seem that some ancient, never-ending tragedy has its stage in these mountains.

Once the sultans located sugar plantations in these uplands and forced the Sous to cultivate the soil and harvest the crop. Story has it that the mountaineers often asked for Christian slaves as a reward for their work. Perhaps it was they who brought the lighter element into the complexion of these people and infused into the wo-



men of the tribe pride and the queenly gift of love with the desire for equality. Who shall ever search out the true thread of the drama? At least, so much one can gather from the old books—that, when the Saadite sultans erected in Marrakesh the pantheon for their dead, they paid for the marble from Carrara with sugar and with the Italian and Spanish slaves who had been dragging out lives of bondage in the mountains of the Atlas. Some echoes come down out of the past from these words of the old chroniclers, waking conjecture and suggesting epics, tragic and unspoken.

Filled with these thoughts and impressions I came back to Marrakesh from the excursion into these mountains where the great caids govern, as feudal masters, the tragic Sous, the despised Draa and the oldest Berber tribes, which have given warlike and splendid monarchs to the whole of Maghreb.

## CHAPTER XXI

### WHITE SWANS ON AN AZURE SHORE

DURING the early hours of morning our car was already heading westward from Marrakesh over an excellent road through prairies so burned by the powerful sun that they often looked like a desert. Across the Nfis River we carried on through uninteresting country until we came to the military post of Shishawa, set in olive-groves and fruit-orchards. I had visited Shishawa for a boar hunt and, though I had only the satisfaction of seeing one tusker shot at by another member of the party, I did not regret the day or the experience, for it gave me the opportunity to see the animal life in the desert and the conditions in the native Berber villages. Just beyond Shishawa we came upon another river, which was bordered by a thicket of tamarisks and was famed for the great quantity of fish it contributed to the countryside. Searching for a moment in its waters, I made out only an eel, this tramp of the sea.

Some fifty miles before we reached Mogador we ran into a well-peopled region with carefully cultivated fields around the native villages and a busy traffic on the road, which wound like a snake among the wooded hills, with oft-recurring white *kubbas* and *zaowias* on their highest points.

Suddenly, after one of the abrupt turns, we saw before us an azure curtain, as it were, hung from the line of the horizon, indistinct and hazy, for it was still behind a morning mist which the sun had not yet chased away. Having covered our one hundred ten miles in less than three hours, we were skirting the shore of the Atlantic before nine o'clock and looking upon the black line of the prison island where criminals and the too-insistent adversaries of the sultan are held in banishment.

Quick to turn our eyes from this line of menacing, unlovely buildings and grim shores, we could not check cries of admiration as we picked up a beautiful peninsula breasting the blue of the sea with its golden sands, its white houses, white minarets and whitened walls.

"A flock of white swans on the azure shore!" exclaimed Zofiette.

It was Mogador, the ancient Roman Thamusiga of which nothing remains except the records of its history. Soon we were at the base of the peninsula and were running out the narrowing neck of land that is being gradually eaten away by the hungry waves. As we entered the town we found its streets exceptionally narrow but very straight, an unusual feature and one attributed to the French architect and Christian slaves who built the city under the orders of Sultan Mohammed ben Abd Allah. But there was little that was unique or curious in the town, if one except the old fortress and the abandoned palace of the sultan.

Near Mogador we saw forests of *Argania Sideroxy-lon*, which furnishes a hard yellow wood, leaves that are of use for feeding cattle and nuts that are both eaten by

cows and camels and are used for the production of oil. These forests are often interspersed with growths of sandarac-trees (also called arar-trees), which serve more than the ordinary single purpose of supplying material for the carpenter, in that they produce sandarac, a resin that is employed in the manufacture of certain varnishes.

Having still nearly a hundred miles to cover before nightfall, we left Mogador shortly after luncheon and were soon running through the rather fertile lands of the Shiadma tribe. On the way we were overtaken by a cold wind and a terrific rain, whose veritable torrents of water, streaming down from the clouds, transformed the gray and yellowish fruit-trees into lovely greens and raised flowers in the seared and parched grasses, where none seemed to exist before. Then, after but a few moments' duration of the storm, another miracle occurred. The immense puddles and even the little streams that had been formed seeped away into the porous soil quite as though they had never existed, the sun reappeared from behind the clouds, and everything dried off with such rapidity that only the green leaves of the trees and the brilliant spots of color contributed by the flowers remained as witnesses of the passing shower.

At frequent intervals along the road we passed rich *kubbas* and gleaming, white *zaouias*. This neighborhood of Safi and Mogador has long been known as the home of numerous religious confraternities and sects, among them the followers of the mysterious prophet Berghwat, who lived in the twelfth century and, among others of his tenets, forbade the killing of cocks, on the ground that the brain and especially the eyes of this bird possessed

magical powers. The eyes, which discern the coming of the sun while it is still night, form talismans for prophets, while the brain, when mixed with aloes and vanilla and wrapped in jackal skins, renders a man invisible and inaudible to others.

As we journeyed northward, we came again into a well-peopled and fertile district, where both the main road and the infiltrating arteries carried ever-increasing streams of camel caravans and native riders. Finally the mass of a rocky promontory protruded itself into the sea, and beyond it we beheld the rocky shores on which the former Portuguese stronghold and colony of Safi lay. Though it was abandoned by the invaders in the middle of the sixteenth century, the old citadel of Keshla, with its cyclopean walls, still dominates and menaces the place.

We had no more than reached the hotel before I received the very welcome announcement that Monsieur Maurice Le Glay was awaiting me in the salon. Maurice Le Glay! For me the sound of this name was a whole symphony. That he was the French Administrator of a large district around Safi and one of the keenest political minds in this part of Maghreb meant little or nothing to me as I hurried to meet him, for I knew another Le Glay, a writer whose manner of thinking and impressionability opened to him the romance of the land and the hidden tragedies of its people. I had read some of his works depicting the Berbers and their life and had found them brilliant and illuminating. I think of him as a musician—his Moroccan novels are like the low notes of a violin in the night-time, when everything around is chained in sleep and an invisible sadness seems to be drawing the

bow across the strings with the lightness of a spirit-hand. These books of Le Glay encase within them the soul of the various Berber tribes within his realm—their strange splendor, their undefined, unvoiced longings, their unfulfilled mission and their eternal note of sadness.

“The Emperor of the Berbers” is the name they have given him in Morocco. The Berbers really have a most deep love and respect for him. This is not strange, as these children of the desert, the mountains and the sun feel that this seemingly severe administrator, with his subtle and impressionable character as a writer and with his heart of a poet and great artist, will understand and have sympathy for the aspirations of their hearts and souls.

When Le Glay came forward as I entered the salon, we seemed to meet as old friends who had known each other for a long time. Unfortunately our hours together were short, owing to the fact that Le Glay had to go on an official journey to Rabat the following morning; yet this brief contact and a few other fleeting hours which we later had together in Casablanca were sufficient to enable me to snatch an understanding of this man of deep thought and with a no less deep sadness wrapped in his heart.

As Le Glay took me in his car for a first visit to the town, the sun was already setting in the sea of a thousand opals that shimmered and gleamed in the rays that were bathing the town in every shade of rose and pink. After passing between the rows of young palms, sandaracs and acacias that edged the wide streets of the new French quarter and out past the palace of the local caid,

where the sultan rests when he is on his way from Rabat to Marrakesh to receive the tribute and homage of the Atlas tribes, we approached the old town, to which the long shadows of the night were already laying siege from the east and above which the citadel, with its menacing walls, crenelated towers and strongly fortified gates that bear Portuguese coats of arms and mottoes of the sixteenth century, loomed like a monstrous eagle's nest on some rocky crag. From two powerful forts, Skutia on the north and Dar el-Behar on the south, old Spanish and Dutch cannon still protruded their threatening black muzzles toward the sea.

"They will show you Keshla and Dar el-Behar tomorrow," said Monsieur Le Glay; "now I want to give you a rapid glimpse of the whole town—my own little Safi, where, in the early decades of the sixteenth century, the enmity reigning between the various Berber families and tribes allowed Don Manuel, the King of Portugal, to take the town without any great difficulty. Then in 1541, after a struggle of thirty years, the sultans drove the Portuguese out. Just now we are passing through the Rbat quarter, which was the home of the most fervid and energetic defenders of Islam."

It was here in this quarter of Rbat that the story of the Portuguese colonization was written in bloody letters. When the invaders took Safi, most of the old Berber families fled from the Medina, but Rbat remained intact. Among its citizens, and especially among the members of the several strong religious fraternities that gathered round the mosque and *zaouias* of the quarter, the sultans, who for a long time fought the invaders, finally worked

up enough fanatical enthusiasm to raise the quarter in Holy War, so that revolts, treason and unexpected armed attacks became the order of the day, until the foreign overlords were finally driven back to their ships. To this very day bards in the market-places throughout all Morocco sing the stories of this quarter, and those who would prepare magic talismans of great efficacy often mingle with the other weird ingredients some of the soil of Rbat, that earth which was drenched with the blood of its staunch *mumani*, so loyal to Islam.

Today here in Rbat Berbers from the Abda, Beni Aït, Dukkala, Shiadma and other tribes no longer carry their long rifles and knives but, in place of these, unmartial staffs to prod the donkeys and camels which bear their products to the merchants of the town; the *mokkhadems* of the sects no longer occupy themselves with fanning the hate against the white invaders but only strive to extract more contributions from the natives arriving from the country, fooling them with vaunted miracles that occur near the tombs of the saints or selling them water from the Sidi Bu Zid spring, which, when added to ordinary water, gives a special whiteness to wool. Everything has changed, and with the change speculation and exploitation have reached even to the heart of Islam. It is sad but it is only in keeping with the times.

After passing through the crowded principal commercial street of the Medina, we came out upon a *place* facing a gate that pierced a thick wall. Le Glay stopped the car to explain:

"This is the prettiest spot in Safi and one, moreover, in which all its story and old customs are gathered."



The sight was really most picturesque. Through the black tunnel of the gate, already drowned in a thick, purple darkness, we could see Keshla perched on the top of the great citadel-rock, with its walls and towers seemingly stuck to the face of the cliff. The castle, bathed in a scarlet light as with the color of blood or fire, standing out on the right, combined with the big, white, rounded *kubbas* on a palm-covered hill to the left to revive for me a page in the history of the struggle between the Saadite dynasty and the Portuguese armies; for it was the cult of the *kubbas* that played a prominent part in the contest, stirring up the religious fanaticism that led the natives on in this conflict between two races and two ideas that culminated in one more triumph for the Law and the Prophet, this time over the severity and cruelty of Portuguese governors.

The *place* before us was thronged with the white figures of the natives and edged with the small booths and tents, where the manufactured products of the town were being exposed. As I glanced also at the dark-blue and brown bournouses surrounding singers and jugglers, I remarked to Le Glay:

"You have your Jemaa el-Fna here also."

As we watched the throng, Keshla put on its dark robes of night, the *kubbas* became gray and their guarding palms black, the first stars took their places in the sky, the crowd in the market began to scatter and finally the protracted call of the muezzin floated down from the minaret and seeped into every corner of the town. A beggar near the gate rose quickly, spread a much-worn sheepskin on the ground, tucked his feet under him and

began repeating after the muezzin that there is no God but Allah, One and Eternal. As the man pressed his hands to his face and made his obeisances, he heard and saw nothing around him, for he was then in direct contact with the Creator of all men, animals and inanimate things. He did not complain of his lot, since Allah knew what was destined for him and he, a poor *meskin*, was sure of a recompense for his resignation to Fate and for his faithfulness to Allah. Asking nothing, he performed his acts of adoration and homage, raised his pock-marked face to the darkening sky and repeated:

“Allah the Merciful, the Protector, the Just, the King of Kings, the Chief! . . .”

Later in the evening, after a delightful dinner in the house of Monsieur Le Glay, the “Emperor of the Berbers” gave me many curious details about Morocco and confirmed once more my strong conviction that man is the product of climate, soil, religious belief and circumstance only in his exterior forms and that the native from the district of Abda or from Erg on the edge of the Sahara is inherently exactly the same as the native from the shores of the Orkhon, of the Behring Sea or of the Yangtze Kiang, the citizen of Winnipeg, New York, Paris, Berlin or Warsaw, in that he possesses a soul that is always unquiet and sad and is longing for wisdom which is beyond his reach and not the direct product of his own brain and for faith in God and in man, the work of His eternal will.

One of the guests who was at the dinner was to be Monsieur Le Glay’s locum-tenens, while he was away at Rabat, and invited us to visit him in the Keshla the fol-

lowing morning. As we left the citadel, he gave us as guide an Arab *spahi* from Algeria to accompany us through the town. Although there in Safi Islam approaches Europe in a more intimate and willing contact than probably at any other point in Morocco and profits by bank credits, post, telegraph and telephone in a most marked degree, it was neither the frequent evidences of this intermingling of the two civilizations nor the contrast of the fortress of Dar el-Behar and its black cannon with the homes and streets of the Berbers or the pottery *suk* with its many-colored wares that arrested our attention, but rather the life of the bazaars and market-places that again established its sway over us. In one of the squares we found, in addition to the singers and jugglers with whom we had become familiar in Marrakesh and Fez, a good-looking young Berber with an expressive, laughing face and thick curly hair who was playing the part of a clown or town fool.

"He is a Draa," observed the *spahi* with contempt, "half Berber and half Negro."

Meanwhile the unperturbed Draa was holding forth in a manner which the interpretation of our *spahi* gave us to understand was a flood of satirical humor against all society around him. He spoke of the hypocrites whom one meets throughout the waking hours of every day—launching his jests at Imams who fulfil the law of the Koran by having only one wife, but maintain a whole bevy of beautiful slaves; mocking *mokkhadems*, who hoodwink the Faithful by every known means; laughing at the so-called wise men, who were deep in the sciences but yet understood not the simplest of ordinary matters;

ridiculing pashas, caids and cadî; and finally imitating women of the harems, singing and dancing with all their mannerisms and showing how they sought to please their lords and masters—and how they betrayed them! Then he began to weep and to complain of gnawing hunger, winking at us as he did so. As the *sous* that fell into his bowl were welcomed with mocking raillery, I threw him a franc in anticipation of a joke that would rock the crowd with laughter. Instead of this the jester saluted me most politely and, half-closing his eyes, said in excellent French:

“I am boundlessly grateful to the noble foreigner.”

Near by, sword-play was being indulged in with wooden staves as substitutes for the lethal blades. The master, after his hands had been kissed by his assistants, was demonstrating a number of passes and blows, in which he used his weapon most skilfully. Then an adversary offered himself from the crowd and enabled us to see a picturesque engagement, full of incredibly rapid twists and turns, with quick transfers of the weapon from one hand to the other and with hard-pressed attacks and most brilliant defence. It became very evident to us that the art of using the sword, which was the pride of the Andalusian Moors on many a field in Europe, had not been entirely forgotten here. The scimitar is the inseparable companion of the followers of the Prophet, who know well the use of it. Everywhere throughout the Moslem countries I have found great artists of the sword: Turkomans with their *kleesh*, Kurds with their long yataghan, curved at the end, Georgians and Ossetes with

their silver-handled *shashka* from Damascus—all of them well skilled in the use of the sword.

The following morning we left Safi and continued northward a hundred miles along the coast, until we again picked up a silvery-white and dazzling town contrasting with the dark-blue field of the sea—Mazagan, distinctly European in character, with its French buildings, churches, lighthouse and docks, all dazzling under the streaming rays of the sun save the somber, towering walls of the old fortress that dominated everything.

When we later visited these powerful embattlements, we passed along the crenelated walls, through the galleries where ancient cannon still stretched toward the sea and land, into the vaults which had previously served as magazines for powder and ball and even down into the cisterns, where the Portuguese stored their water-supply against the time of siege. There was the tower also from which the coming of the enemy was pealed forth during those three hundred years from the beginning of the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, when the Portuguese maintained a long and constant struggle against the natives and used this stronghold as their sallying point from which to drive excursions into the land. To the north they made expeditions that resulted in the capture of Asemmur and the little town of Tit, which, however, they could not long hold against the Dukkala and Rehamna tribes, as they had not their impregnable walls and destructive cannon to breast the attacks of the Berbers.

Judging from the subterranean cisterns, immense

vaults and roofed basins for catching rain-water in the fortress at Mazagan, we could easily surmise that even in this great stronghold they were probably not unfamiliar with the necessities of siege and were so ringed in by a hostile population that they were unable to avail themselves of the fresh water in the river and in the wells and springs near the *kubba* of Sidi Daoudi.

It would seem that the present inhabitants of the fertile Dukkala country, rich in grain, fruit and cattle, still feel the spirit of the days of Portuguese domination, for they practically never come in except on market days and then remain only so long as is absolutely necessary in this town where so many of their ancestors fell through nearly three centuries of constant fighting. The Dukkala regard Asemmur as their capital, a place which also had its history of strife during those earlier centuries when the Carthaginians first used it to dominate and drain the neighboring country and were then followed by the Romans, who carried with them the inevitable military power that assured the authority of the Caesars.

After our brief survey of these two coastal towns we continued northward and picked up at Casablanca our previous trail.

## CHAPTER XXII

### TWO WORLDS

ONCE more we crossed Morocco, from the shores of the Atlantic to the Algerian frontier, passing through Rabat, Sali, Meknes, Fez and Tasa without stopping for more than an occasional word with the friends we had made in these towns of the French and Moors and for the necessary rest and "*restauration*"; for we were racing with the autumn to reach Ujda and from there to journey south across the High Plateaus to the oasis of Figig, that last bit of life looking into the death-mask of the desert. The winter in North Africa, with its winds and rains, is no time for the traveler to be moving.

This rapid flight across the whole country gave me a kaleidoscope of the material face of the land and afforded me the opportunity and mental leisure to pass before my mind a similarly kaleidoscopic review of the psychology of it all.

Our road carried us through the French-influenced towns and past the lands where French, Spanish and Italian colonists, employing the most modern methods of agriculture, harvested bountiful yields that paid them liberally for their far-from-easy conditions of work under the rays of the scorching sun. Before our eyes also

slipped by the Berber villages, black *duars* and gleaming *kubbas*, picturesque *saouias* and the poorly tilled lands of the natives, where a pair of under-fed donkeys or an exhausted camel were dragging a prehistoric wooden plough fitted with a small iron share and where the crop depended entirely upon the will of Allah.

We saw French railways, well-laid roads, carefully built wells and reservoirs, modern hospitals and schools, motor-buses and streams of private cars, radio aerials, beautiful parks, artistic monuments and theaters—and interspersed everywhere among these old caravan routes and strings of tramping camels, padding the sands in stately rhythm and carrying their imperious heads well up and forward as pointing the way to some goal of grave import. We came upon heaps of stones near forgotten tombs and upon wells and springs of delicious water whose masonry the centuries had crumbled. Messengers, speeding with important news, passed us on the way; the tops of beautiful trees looked down upon us from behind the walls of immense and charming gardens, to which a white man may never yet have had access; beautiful palaces hid themselves away in tortuous and narrow streets, sheltering within them a life that had for centuries been led according to the law of the Koran.

In another spot the metallic voice of a gramophone would be luring the tired colonist to a cinema, while from a minaret hard by the muezzin would be summoning the Faithful to prayer and pronouncing in holy zeal the ninety-nine blessed names of Allah.

Scorching heat by day and cold blasts by night; a mirage shimmering in the transparent, almost limitless



air and in another moment a yellow curtain, an impenetrable cloud of fine particles of sand borne up from the Sahara; here date-palms, olives, pomegranates, tropical *Sapotaceae* and *Argania Sideroxylon*, there a little higher up pines, cedars, sandaracs and over all the Atlas snows—a country of most pronounced natural and social contrasts.

What could the descendants of the encyclopaedists, what could Anatole France, Rolland, Rostand and Chénier, or what could the countrymen of Cervantes, Blasco Ibañez, or of Dante Alighieri and d'Annunzio have in common with the men brought up on Moslem tradition, on the utterances of *kahinas* and on *madik*, the religious poetry of the Koran world?

The white strangers, skilled in building railways, asphalt roads, structures of iron and concrete, cannon, submarines, steel-plated ships, cars, aeroplanes and radio equipment—what could they have in common with the brown and black autochthons of the desert country, learned in the laws of the Prophet and acknowledging the superior wisdom of *arrafs* as well as the *tassarouf*, that supernatural power over the forces of nature with which their *sherifs* and Marabouts are fully credited?

It seems to me that the answer is clear—not only is there nothing uniting these races, the newcomers from Europe and the ancient invaders from Asia, but hostile phenomena are always and everywhere to be expected. Yet we find that the Europeans, knowing not only the very material science of keeping down expenses but foretelling, with an ability abreast of that of the seers, the future yields and profits, are steadily bringing new capital

into the country and putting it into this earth that is so burned and baked by the sun. Among the six million of Berbers, Arabs, Jews, Negroes and other mixed peoples within this area of approximately one hundred seventy thousand square miles<sup>1</sup> the white population does not count more than two hundred thousand souls. However, this oasis, as it were, in the greater desert of people has worked a miracle, having performed it through its training in the great school of energy, wherein climate, soil and man, in fact everything, is strange and hostile; where the newcomer must first conquer innumerable difficulties, calm the stormy waves of the surging people and then only begin the work of constructive creation.

It is quite patent that representatives of the white race who are in Morocco are giving ample evidence of organizing instinct and are guiding this work well, in proof of which one need cite no further fact than that the ports of Knitra, Rabat, Fedalah, Casablanca, Safi and Mogador have not only insufficient produce to meet their export demands but are also constantly enlarging the machinery of their commerce and their technical equipment. Back of these gates to the outer world the strategic railways bring out produce and wares from as far east as the Algerian frontier and south to the High Atlas, while over shorter hauls new motor routes are driven into the producing regions to supplement with their lumbering trucks the soft-footed camel. In the opposite direction the roads bear back to the Berber villages and hitherto untouched regions the primary elements of Western civil-

<sup>1</sup> There is great diversity in the reported area of the country, even in official figures. Some of these give as high as 320,000 square miles.

ization and Christian culture, often beginning with medical aid and the supplying of the districts with sufficient water, this magic element that brings life and strength to the dried but fertile soil of Maghreb, and ending by importing sewing-machines, ploughs and other products of Western factories, even though these may at times be only bright, naïve lithographs of Mecca or of the tomb of the Prophet.

Under the influence of irrigation, commercial fertilizers and modern machinery the previously arid stretches of the country are converted into a granary that yields its largess not only to France but to more distant countries of the world. In view of the oft-expressed concern of those who study the subject of the world's grain supply of the not-very-distant future Morocco is worthy of deep consideration and will probably soon come into her own as one of the large grain-producing countries of the globe. At present its natives and colonists exploit only a small portion of its soil, which so readily yields good crops of wheat, rye, oats, maize, millet, sorghum, beans, lentils, hemp, flax, cotton, vegetables and fodder for cattle. In fruit culture Spaniards, Italians and Greeks produce great varieties of grapes, almonds, plums, apricots, apples, oranges, lemons, dates, figs, persimmons and bananas.

Upland pastures and particularly the tracts covered with alfa-grass offer opportunity for modern cattle-production on an extensive scale. Cattle-breeding is now badly neglected by the natives, as is also the breeding of the fine strains of Berber, Arab and Syrian horses. The production of sheep and goats is better managed by them,

though improvement is also necessary in this field as well, and experiments yield most satisfactory results.

Besides these riches of the soil Maghreb has also its wealth of forests, yielding not only timber but great quantities of cork, resin, sandarac, oils and other products.

Industry is not greatly developed throughout the country but, if we may judge from the increasing investments of capital, is on a rapid upward trend.

In recent years mining has also attracted attention, but until now very little substantial progress has been made in this activity. Geological surveys have fallen far short of exhausting the mineral possibilities of the country, and I am led by what I saw superficially in the High Atlas and on the elevated plateau between Ujda and Figig to feel that strata of considerable interest to the mining industry may easily reward further investigations. In these various activities the genius of the white race is driving it forward to work upon the soil of Morocco and exploit its possibilities, penetrating year by year further into the country and by its example attracting the brown and black natives into similar activities. Capital and hard labor bring liberal reward, but these riches are hidden in the earth no less carefully than the treasures of the tragic Sous, for only the man who is strong in mind and body can win this guerdon from the soil. The weak, the timorous and the lazy are here sentenced to destruction. For a long time hence powerful and tenacious characters will be forged and hardened in this energetic school, where no one asks certificates of past extraction or intention but where a man is judged according to his acts of

every day. The men who are making good there under these conditions are the finest exponents of Western civilization and continually win over to its support many of the natives. In this work is the best road to understanding and co-operation, and out of this ought to be developed other relations, if only the proper balance can be maintained.

One of the French officials in Kabylia revealed to me some of the difficulties of administration, when one has to keep in mind the French law, the traditions of the *Hadith*, the common law formed by the customs of the country and, in addition to all these, the so-called "*kanoun*," which is the unwritten local law that frequently varies widely in nearby places. All these complications can, as a result of one incautious step, involve the foreigner in an atmosphere of suppressed hostility and displeasure. This whole galaxy of psychological factors, that are often half hidden or entirely imperceptible, is hemmed round by Islam with outwardly expressed laws and requirements, which are made more rigorous or are relaxed according to the political interests of the caliphate. One can manage some of the details of the situation: one can, for instance, study the Koran and familiarize oneself with its social and religious regulations; one can even come to understand the spirit of *Hadith*, the Moslem tradition; but who could comprehend the mind of a Moroccan Moslem with his Olympus of various dead, yet still influential, saints and of living saints, Marabouts, prophets, hidden Mahdis, sorcerers, fortune-tellers and djinns, which are always putting a finger in every pie, not to speak of the good spirits, and

of magic which continually exerts its influence every hour of every day and is always openly or secretly acknowledged as all-powerful?

It is perhaps easier to appreciate some of these difficulties, if one has a concrete example to refer to. I had one such from a French firm that was interested in purchasing wool in the southern districts of Morocco. Their representative enjoyed friendly and profitable relations with the population of many Berber villages, as he had known them for a long time and was at home in their language.

Once, when he turned up at one of the large settlements just before the shearing time, he found an Arab merchant from Algiers installed before him and learned from native friends that the man had come to buy the village wool.

"But I have an agreement with you for two more years," the agent protested to the Berbers.

"Yes," they replied, "you are quite right and may rest assured that we shall keep our bargain."

Satisfied with their answer, the agent returned to Casablanca but waited in vain on the appointed day for the arrival of the caravan that was to bring him the wool. When it had not arrived after a week, a messenger was despatched to the village and brought back word that the Berbers did not wish to transport the wool but that the merchant must come for it himself. On returning to the place and inquiring the reason for their change of heart, the foreigner had this response:

"You cast a spell over Ali's son and made him deathly ill. The hakim told us that it was the work of the evil

eye of an unbeliever; and, as no one but you has seen him, you are the cause of his misfortune."

Protestations of innocence by the agent availed nothing. As a proof that the hakim was right, an old beggar woman possessing the gift of second sight was summoned, looked into the eyes of the merchant and declared that the stranger in truth had "a bad eye." Immediately the Berbers who were in the room with the agent left the house in terror. Then a friend of the Frenchman, a local *cadi*, advised him to seek out the Marabout as the highest tribunal for his case. During his talk with the Marabout the agent incautiously and probably as a result of exasperated nerves snapped out:

"You confuse the serious things of life with your superstitious and foolish beliefs!"

"Sidi," answered the Marabout, straightening himself, "our beliefs are as old as this earth which you course. Hundreds of generations have held these beliefs, lived according to them and prospered in following them. Do not offend our faith."

When he found he could do nothing with the saint, he returned to the house of the *cadi*. But the Marabout had spread like lightning the word that the Frenchman had offended the whole community by calling their faith stupid, which brought an electric transition in the attitude of the *cadi*. As an official personage, owing much to the favor of the French administration, he was polite but refused to give any material aid to the agent.

"I shall go to the tribunal," the Frenchman threatened.

"*Insh Allah*."

"Djinns will take revenge on all of you," the agent

shouted in retort, while laughing inwardly at the emptiness of his threat.

"*Insh Allah*," was again all the *cadi* replied, as he left the house to go directly to the Marabout to warn him that the Frenchman had threatened the village with djinns.

"Woe unto us," wailed the Marabout, "for, if he threatens with djinns, it means that he is a sorcerer and has dominion over djinns. We must have prayers and exorcisms to ward off misfortune."

The whole night passed in deliberations with the old men and women of the village as to what must be done against the evil spirits of the Frenchman. The following morning the foreigner discovered magic signs to counteract the machinations of the djinns drawn large with charcoal on all the houses and likewise found that the natives shunned him as something tainted and pestiferous—also that the Arab merchant was meanwhile buying up the wool.

This is an instance from the personal experiences of individuals. When, however, some political action is initiated against the sultan or the foreign authorities, then the sorcerers and prophets set to work to fan the fanaticism of the population into a raging flame. The words of the *kahinas* are read over in secret; all sorts of visions that had come to the saints are whispered in the mountain caves and out on the broad desert; unknown persons pass among the populace and suggestively present to the men of the tribes talismans engendering courage and amulets affording protection from bullets.

Usually at such times a Marabout enters upon a period



of *riada*, or mortification of the flesh, during which, suffering the pangs of hunger and thirst, he strays off into the desert, where he keeps a sleepless vigil of prayer, repeating continually all of the names of Allah, flogs himself, wanders about naked and finally, returning to the haunts of men, exhibits to the Faithful the talisman *teksis*, which is a powerful magic means of rendering its bearer invisible. With this talisman in hand the Marabout will have made his way into the presence of the person against whom the movement is being fomented and recounts to his hearers how he was invisibly present in the palace of the sultan or in the camp of the unbelievers and listened to their criminal plots against the welfare of the natives. Such revelations, of course, rouse the people to a fever-pitch of excitement, which is the exact purpose of the holy Marabout.

When Mahdis appear, or at the beginning of a holy War, the Marabouts profit very cleverly by the strong religious beliefs and fanaticism of the women. One of the most familiar ways of doing this is for a Marabout to announce after a *riada* that through mysterious sources of information he has obtained the knowledge of how to draw the *dairat el-ihata*, or the magic circle which is traced upon the ground on certain days and within strictly designated hours through the medium of a long form of incantation, involving the continued and monotonous shouting of incomprehensible words like "*Karum, Firum, Hamana,*" and the writing of mysterious signs on the garments of those around him.

After the magic circle has been limned on the ground, a Marabout announces that a woman may step within the

inspired figure and that, by Allah's will, she will fall asleep and have a vision which shall contain certain guidance for the tribe in this hour of trial. The Marabouts always choose a woman that is far from young and usually in some way abnormal. When his subject falls asleep, she sees in her dream the legendary, mysterious traveler, Ali ben Abi Thaleb, with whom she speaks in a loud voice, while the Marabout constructs from her words new horoscopes for the guidance of the tribe.

This is the only example that I came across of the Marabouts using hypnosis and profiting by the hysteria of their victims. Lehmann says that what is called "magic" has its sources and explanation in an abnormally active state of the nerves, in hysteria and in hypnotism. This pronouncement may well be applied to the Asiatic magic, that of Buddhism and Lamaism as well as that of the paganism of the Eastern continent; but the magic of Islam is upheld by tradition and by the blind faith in Marabouts and sorcerers.

Such magic practices stir up the fanaticism not only of men but of women as well. Accustomed to obedience and to remaining at home, sheltered by veils and high walls from the eyes of strange men, these Moslem women during a period of war often so far forsake their ordinary customs and surroundings as to go with their husbands to battle, urging them on in the fight and carrying their spare arms.

The contrasts and examples touched upon in this chapter will suffice to indicate somewhat the difference between the two worlds, the European one with its railroads, tractors and rationalism, and the Moslem one with

its magic works of Ibn el-Hadj and its *Rhama*, its magical circle ceremoniously drawn upon the ground, its talismans and its amulets. In this world of Islamic customs and superstitions the usual method of assimilating colonization does not function; in its stead another procedure has to be worked out, bedded upon a real respect for Islam and all its mass of tradition and supported by the living examples of virile men full of energy and loyalty to the best of the European ideals.

The conditions of co-operation and intermingling are very difficult and not to be relied upon as constant, so that the results are frequently quite unexpected on both sides. No one can formulate a general system of procedure for working together, as the conditions are as numerous as are the tribes, sects, Marabouts, magi and other exterior influences. I feel certain that the activities of the white race are most difficult in the Moslem countries, which, though they are entirely uniform in their religious ideology, differ so fantastically in their local traditions and ethnic psychology that one country or locality affords little measure of what may be expected in another. I believe that these difficulties will for a long time continue to hamper Europe—who has up to the present quite inadequately fulfilled her mission in the world—so long as no radical changes take place in the ideology of Islam. Only the living example of the energy, decision and spirit of enterprise of honest and wise European colonists can bring nearer this period of successful union between the two civilizations! nor may their arms be cannon and carbine, but they must be wisdom, strong will and ingrained respect for law.

Alas, meanwhile the Moslems from time to time raise the menacing green flag of the Prophet, which forces the Europeans to take arms and thus at one fell swoop wipes out the gains of patient, enduring toil, sweeping away hundreds of misguided natives and leaving Death ever ready to swing further his fatal scythe. This affords irrefragable proof that only evolution in Islam and synchronously an evolution in the colonial politics of the white race can lead into another channel the fate of material Western civilization on this globe of ours. I say "material civilization," as Islam, Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism and even paganism do not want our moral civilization as it stands today. It appeals to them as pernicious hypocrisy, as words void of real sense and as never soundly based, inasmuch as—following the declaration of the Indian Moslems in London—"Europe has forgotten Christ's Sermon on the Mount."

## CHAPTER XXIII

### ON THE HIGH PLATEAUS

ON arriving at Ujda after our rapid run of something over six hundred miles from the Atlantic to the edge of the High Plateaus that gradually merge into the Sahara, we were very much in need of a rest before setting out on our last long trip in Morocco that would carry us southward over three hundred miles to the oasis of Figig and we consequently welcomed the excuse for a short respite afforded to us by the promise of the newly arrived consul, Monsieur de Vitasse, to accompany us on his first inspection of this part of the district to which he had just been transferred from Cairo, if we would but delay our departure for three days. He not only gave us a most cordial welcome and this offer to accompany us, but also held out the very delightful prospect that Colonel and Madame Pariel were waiting to receive us in their distant oasis.

After three enjoyable days in Ujda under the kindly favor of Monsieur de Vitasse, we started south across the plain of Angad and soon found ourselves winding among the forest-covered, low mountain-ranges of El-Hamra, M'Sila and Mehasseur. Beyond these mountains, the last of which was the crest of Chekhar, began the flat coun-

try belonging to the Uled Barka tribes, which is covered with the alfa-grass (*Macrochloa tenacissima*) that serves not only as fodder for their cattle but provides also fuel and the stock for the manufacture of paper in some of the mills of France and Spain. As we rode through the country, we saw numerous herds of sheep grazing on the prairies and also flushed many flocks of birds, among others some bustards (*Otis tarda* and *Otis houbara*), which rose near by and flew majestically away, while we hurriedly brought out our guns and threw them together to be ready for that next flock which never appeared within range.

"We are approaching Berguent and shall there find Colonel Pariel, who has come north to meet me here and distribute the prizes for the best horses the natives bring in for this contest," said Monsieur de Vitasse.

This announcement came as a very delightful surprise to us and was immediately supplemented by the dramatic and unusual reception which we were given as we approached the town. While we were still some distance out, we were met by a small detachment of *spahis* who raced toward the car like a flock of birds coming down the wind, suddenly changed their character, became motionless in the mold of a military rank and presented arms. After the swords had gleamed in the sun and a shout of welcome had gone up, the chief shortened his rein so that his steed reared high on its hind legs, uttered a word of command that threw the group once more into liquid mobility and then dashed in front of the car with two supporting *spahis*, while the others surrounded us as a flock of gulls convoys a ship at sea.

We drew up on a large square in the town, where the consul was met by Colonel Pariel and several officers who had assembled for the occasion. It was interesting to watch the large gathering of Arabs and Jews in their picturesque garments and the local notables in their best bournouses and turbans performing the salaam and welcoming Monsieur de Vitasse. After the ceremony accompanying the presentation of reports to the consul and the introduction of officials the inspection of the horses began. To me the animals did not appear to be particularly fine specimens; yet I must admit that I am hardly a fair judge, as I am not familiar with the Berber and Arab breeds. As the day of our arrival happened to be Monday, we were also fortunate in striking a *suk*, or market, to which the local population of the region flocked in crowds with their sheep, camels and various products and wares for sale and exchange. The combination of these two major events gave to the town an air of bustle and life and an appearance of brilliance and color.

While Zofiette went to the home of the civil administrator, Monsieur Marcel, to greet Madame Pariel and to have some rest before the luncheon to which he had invited us, I turned to visit the town and the near-by slopes of Jebel Sidi el-Abid which overhangs Berguent. I also had a look at the market outside the town and at the streets in the Arab quarter before returning to the *place*. I shall long remember the impressions of that morning. The sun blazed madly and with such pitiless fire that it was only my rather thick garments which protected me from its burning rays. From the slopes of the mountain I looked out over the yellow, or rather golden, desert

that stretches from the town toward the horizon, feasted my eyes upon the consoling promise embodied in a rivulet of precious water and took the final elements of the picture from the tall trees that dotted the oasis and from the multi-colored coats of the crowds of men and the flocks of sheep, the horses, the donkeys and the camels. Falcons and hawks sailed high in the air, as though they too were drinking in the picture of the sun-bathed town in the desert.

After the ceremony in the *place* had ended, I went to the quarters prepared for us and succeeded at last in getting rid of all the sand about me except that which continued to turn up from between my teeth. Then, after a most delightful luncheon in the house of Monsieur Marcel, we would willingly have remained inside to avoid the burning rays of the desert sun and to rest, were it not that our joint hosts, Colonel Pariel and Monsieur Marcel, had arranged quite an unusual spectacle for us—real Arab horse-races out on the desert.

Welladay! To see the sons of the golden sand at full gallop—this were a delight that would outweigh all minor physical considerations. Never mind the champagne and cognac, to say nothing of the white and red wines; never mind the hundred twenty-seven degrees of temperature—let us go to the races under the broiling sun! Fortunately Monsieur Marcel had caused two great tents to be set up for the spectators and liberal supplies of vichy and tea with mint provided for our comfort against the sizzling heat.

When the horses appeared, we found that there were some beautiful specimens among them, slender of limb,



sleek and finely molded in body, quick, wild and strong with eyes that gleamed fire and mirrored the great stretches of the desert. And the riders—oh, artists of the whole world, why were you not there? In their wide trousers and short jackets with turbans clinging close to their shaven heads, the Arabs sat first as motionless as stone statues, their horses apparently understanding as well as the riders the solemnity and gravity of the moment, while two orchestras of drums, tambourines, pipes and bells played the martial airs of the desert folk. Then the signal was given, and four of the riders bent low over the necks of their now-transformed steeds and swept out in a great circle of liquid, softly billowing speed. We had no more than gasped and expressed our wonder at the grace and speed of this first quartette before another group was off. As they coursed in fours, sixes and eights, excitement and hazard grew as well among the riders as among those of us who watched this most unique scene. One of the best of the men up proved to be a *spahi* at the garrison, who made five of the courses and seemed not to tire at all.

After the distribution of prizes by Monsieur de Vitasse, we went for an excursion to the spring of Ras el-Aïn, whose waters burst forth from under little domes of pushed-up sand and joined together to form the stream of the Berguent River, that passes through and gives life to the oasis. I did not notice any fish in it but saw an amazing quantity of small, ordinary water-turtles.

On our way back we were met by Monsieur Marcel, who had come out to tell us that a *fantasia* was being arranged and that we must hurry on to be in time for it.

As I had read and heard much of this performance by Arab horsemen, I was consequently most anxious to see it and disregarded the amused comments of my companions when I hurried off ahead of them at the sound of a rifle shot and the staccato of horses' hoofs mingled with the shouts of the riders. The *fantasia* was beginning. I found the whole square surrounded by Arabs, Berbers, Jews and Europeans, but not a woman among them. Knowing well that a *fantasia* brings together many fine-looking, appealing men who become more and more inspired by the spirit of battle and that a woman's heart is readily moved by displays of courageous strength, the jealous monsters, men, lock well the strong doors of their houses to prevent the possibility of their wives and daughters from "showing a foot" or letting their voices be heard, in accordance with the directions of the merry and wise patron saint of Tlemsen.

At the southern end of the *place* were gathered a score of riders with their horses pressing one against the other, rearing, fighting and kicking. As the orchestra struck up a quick rhythm, eight riders separated from the mass and ranged themselves in line with military precision. Resting the butts of their long Moroccan rifles against their right hips, they sat motionless like a group of wonderful models for some master sculptor's hand, awaiting the signal that should galvanize them into action.

Who would give it? My eyes searched round to find the man who should command and direct the spirit of action in these handsome riders on their wild and lovely steeds, of these warriors in their picturesque attire with their bournouses that will soon be veritable wings, with

their fantastic turbans and with their colored jackets adorned in gold and silver embroidery.

Soon I discovered him in the person of their chief, who sat his white thoroughbred, with its brilliant red saddle and bridle, there on a mound just opposite me. The Arab beast, statuesquely beautiful, stood motionless with its flaming eyes staring far out on the desert plain it loved to course and its nostrils spread as though they searched for the air of the open spaces. As the rider sat his motionless mount, his picturesquely draped bournous did not hide his fine, stalwart form. From under the cowl that covered his turban, well-deep, dark eyes told of the spirit and expectancy within, while his black beard, spreading over his bournous, seemed to add the last bit of evidence of repose and strength.

At a slight signal from his hand the line of riders shouted, started their horses forward, threw their rifles into the air, catching them again while still in motion, and managed somehow to keep the dress of the line, though the horses, once in action, lunged and showed great nervousness. When the line reached the middle of the square, the riders raised their rifles above their heads and gave forth a tremendous shout. Then suddenly, as though madness had seized them, they let their reins fall from their hands and gave another wild, sharp and guttural yell, following which the horses sprang into a gallop at such speed that their bodies seemed raised above the ground in flight and coursed round the *place* like a group of falcons chasing a flock of finches. Another shout, and the men sent a volley into the air from their long rifles, leaving little cloudlets of white smoke and the

echoes playing back and forth from *kubbas* and mountains to add their weird contribution to the scene. Then they fired at random, some into the air, some toward the ground, so that ragged clouds of smoke and dust seemed in flight among the riders.

But what will become of the crowd, if these wild steeds of the desert, with their bloodshot eyes and foaming mouths and excited to a point approaching madness, galloping within ten feet of the line of onlookers, lose their heads and break for the open? A shout, and the question is answered; for the horses are on their haunches, and the laughing riders have formed the perfect line again, are reloading their rifles, as they trot back to the end of the *place*, and are throwing, in magnificent gesture, coins to the lesser beings who must stay down on the ground and make music to which warriors may ride.

Other groups repeated the same general performance, but what a variety in the way they shot and rode and cried! One could watch them for hours on end and always discover new details. When the *fantasia* was nearly finished, the commanding spirit on the little hillock, who turned out to be a local caid, descended from his staff-position and entered himself into the wild display. The *fantasia* now reached its highest pitch of abandon, just as the sun was splashing its last rays against the oasis which it had flooded with molten gold throughout the day. The *kubbas* seemed wrapped in brilliant flames, the river was turned into a ruby ribbon and the now-scarlet figures of the riders seemed to be the draft that stirred the flame. One moment more and all this glory was lost forever in the unbreakable caverns of the

past—save as the key of memory might unlock some of the lesser vaults.

"*La Illah Illah Allah . . . Mahommed Rassul Allah!*" came from the lips of an old Arab, squatting on his prayer-mat somewhere near. The crowd began rapidly dispersing to return to their homes and offer praises to Allah, while the riders from the distant nomad camps, where they had left their herds and flocks, scattered among the various inns to wash the grime and dust from their hands and faces that they too might raise them purged to the sky and repeat in His praise the ancient words:

"There is no God above Allah! His Eternal Name be praised by the men, nations and countries of the whole earth! *Allah Akbar, Allah Mani, Allah Rashid, Allah Kadim!*"

As I came back to our quarters, full of the thrills and pictures of the afternoon, I overheard one of the officials saying to a *spahi*:

"Do not neglect to see whether the natives have used all the powder issued to them. If any of it is left, collect it and put it in the storehouse."

It was easy to infer from this that an Arab possessing powder might prefer to associate it in undesirable juxtaposition with lead rather than to explode it in the harmless curls of smoke that decorated the *place*.

During dinner with Colonel and Madame Pariel and Monsieur de Vitasse the Colonel recounted many interesting stories about the natives, some of which illustrate most clearly certain unique features of their mental field.

One of these dealt with a Berber who, when he re-

turned from service in the war, answered a query as to what had astonished him most by saying:

"Three things seemed strange to me. In our village iron, when thrown into water, will sink at once; yet on the great sea I sailed in a ship made all of iron. I am sure of this, because I tapped her sides with my hands; yet she went not under. This I do not understand. Also, the French horses astonished me, those that they used in the ports to haul great loads. Their hind legs are so thick that one of them would be equal to four or five of those of our animals. And what completely amazed me was a man standing on a high bridge and lifting with a chain loads that thirty men of our village could not have raised from the ground." This last referred to an electric crane.

Monsieur de Vitasse also recalled an amusing case of an Arab's experience in Paris. During one of the ceremonies in the Place de l'Etoile, at which many of the generals who had taken part in the war were present, the wave of emotion following some of the speeches was so strong that many of those present wept. A caid invited to the function was found weeping also. When asked why he wept, the caid for a long time did not regain sufficient composure to answer but finally replied:

"I cried from enthusiasm, as I could not look at the horse of General Pershing without shedding tears; it was so moving, so splendid!" and he had no more than answered before he wept again, this lover and connoisseur of beautiful horses.

The following morning we left Berguent. Our first stage, to the small civil administration outpost at Tendirara, carried us through a plain that was also covered

with alfa-grass and afforded pasturage for the herds of the nomads we found encamped there. Inasmuch as their *duars*, or encampments, were always some distance off the road, we only occasionally saw out near the horizon the black spots of the tents, the shepherds guarding their flocks and the grazing camels.

As we were passing along the dried bed of the Tanek-huft River, we came upon two gazelles (*Gazella dorcas*) feeding in some thick alfa-grass. One of them made off in great jumps until it had disappeared in the green sea of the plain, while the second one continued to graze, apparently undisturbed by our presence. I snatched my rifle and had a shot at it at six hundred yards, only to see it bound away in the direction we were going. This gave me an opportunity to witness a repetition of the experience I had had when hunting antelopes (*Gazella gutturosa*) in Mongolia. As soon as we were under way, the gazelle quickened its pace with every increase in our speed and carried on for a distance parallel to our course, until it decided to put on more power and led us by a sufficient distance to allow it to cross in front of us. It was so far ahead and the motion of the car was so disturbing that I could only increase its speed with the shots I sent after it.

In view of the fact that certain sporting magazines had questioned my assertion of this characteristic in the Mongolian antelope, I was very much interested and pleased to see the trait duplicated in its African cousin and to hear from local hunters unquestioned confirmation of this peculiar habit.

In Tendirara, where two low, naked ranges come to-

gether from the northeast and southwest, we found a small French administrative village with a civil official and a guard of Arab horsemen. After being served coffee by the young and very *chic* Parisian wife of the official, we continued on through another plain of alfa-grass, but this time streaked with ever-increasing bands of naked clay and sand set with small stones. Not a living being, not a bird nor even a lizard was to be seen, with the exception of a small flock of bustards which we sighted near the bed of a dried stream. Monsieur de Vitasse and I assembled our guns and tried to stalk them but were unsuccessful in getting within range. Disgusted with our failure, we put our guns back in their cases, only to see a magnificent specimen rise within fifty yards of the car out of some thick grass that grew in a ditch. A real misfortune! But I knew it would be so, as I met an old Arab woman just as I was leaving the house in Berguent to enter the car. Hunting tradition the world round has well established the fact that to meet an old woman on the way to the field tolls the knell of all chance. One can then miss an elephant at five paces, to say nothing of a flying bustard or a speeding gazelle.

As we journeyed, we did not see a single trace of man. Farther on a string of camels appeared from behind a low hill and soon lost itself around another. But when we entered the region of Oglat ben Abd el-Jebbar with its good wells, we came upon many herds and their attending nomads. Then soon the prairie was pressed into a narrow valley between flanking mountains, high up on one of which we sighted some European buildings and telegraph poles.



"It is Bu Hafa," explained the chauffeur, "where the manganese-mines are located. Before the war these were operated by German interests but are now controlled by other foreigners."

After enjoying near Bu Hafa the luncheon which Madame Pariel had thoughtfully brought along and which was spread amid the rather gloomy surroundings of these outspurs of the High Atlas, we met some Arabs on splendid mounts, riding in advance of a caravan of camels, punctuated at intervals with covered litters from which black-eyed women and children peeped out at us. They were guarded by young and old men, traveling on foot or mounted on donkeys and all of them carrying rifles and knives. In the distance a mirage shimmered, showing most plainly an island with a forest on it. But once we had topped a rise of ground, lake, island and forest all disappeared by the same magic that had made them so real a moment before.

As we continued our way, at one point the alfa-grass abruptly disappeared, giving way to areas of yellow and pale-green stones, almost all uniformly rounded and covered with little knobs and protuberances. In the course of investigating the geological formation, I sat down on one of these stones but jumped up as though it were red hot, with an acute pain in the palm of one of my hands which I had placed upon it and in which hundreds of needle-like points had made diminutive holes.

"You must be careful," cried Pariel, "for those 'stones' are really cacti."

Examining them closely, I could see that they actually were a vegetable growth, apparently as hard as stone,

covered with minute thorns and some of them bearing small, yellow flowers. My knife could penetrate them, in spite of their hardness, due to saturation with chalk and magnesium salts. Colonel Pariel told me that their proper description is "Anabasis," though the French commonly call them "cauliflowers"—and, really, they rather closely resemble them.

The Anabasis is the flower of the Sahara and marked very distinctly the beginning of the sands. Marvelously patterned little ridges and kopjes revealed the handiwork of the swirling winds, while the gradually receding face of the mountain bore evidence of the stronger currents from the south and southeast that carried myriads of silicious missiles to wear it away. Great rows of rocks at times stretched across the plain, resembling the ancient ruins of some long-forgotten civilization. Among these and the giant Anabasis, jackals and fennecs (*Fennecus zerda*) range, while vipers of all the varieties known in this latitude seemed to be basking there.

The fennec resembles a small fox but has large ears with long white hair inside them. It is quick, energetic and cautious, and the Arabs assert that it will climb trees. It seems to me that this characteristic of the animal must be derived from some feline strain in its ancestry, a possibility which is suggested also by the fact that fennecs play with their prey for a long time before killing it and also maintain great cleanliness in their surroundings.

Finally we reached a low, rocky pass, Teniet Zerga, resembling an immense gate. At the further end the road turned and brought us abruptly out of the pass above a large, deep valley with a single opening toward the south.

Through and beyond this we could see the immense plain of Zulfana, which dropped gradually down until it was lost in the sandy hills of the Sahara. In the bottom of the valley the eye feasted upon a dark, green sea of splendid palms, some million of which the oasis of Figig counted as its own. The inevitable wonder-working river flowed between the towering hills of golden sand and down among the palms on its largess-distributing progress to the south. Until recently the Zulfana was considered an affluent of the Niger, but the celebrated geographer and authority on the Sahara, Professor E. F. Gautier, has proven that the Zulfana disappears in the sands of the desert to the south of Figig. Possibly it is a subterranean affluent of the Guir.

Dotted among the palms we could count seven pink villages and, set apart from them, the white, picturesque buildings of pseudo-Moroccan architecture which form the most advanced administrative French post in south-eastern Morocco. The settlement comprises only four officials with their families, a doctor and some native cavalry. There are no colonists at all. In the surrounding seven villages some fifteen thousand natives lead their entirely different, primitive life, counting among them also about five hundred old Moroccan Jewish families. Near by in the desert, in the alfa-prairies and in the mountains camp thousands of nomads.

As we drew up before the residence of Colonel and Madame Pariel, we were met by smiling and most polite Arab servants. Escorted in to the terrace, we beheld a most pleasing fruit-garden with an avenue of palms carrying great bunches of golden dates. It was amusing to

watch Madame Pariel's little dog frisking about under the palms and waiting for the dates which the birds dropped as they worked among the bunches.

In the evening, when we had dressed and come in from our quarters in the smaller bungalow in the garden to the larger house, filled with its objects of African art, beautiful pictures, magazines and books and radiating a sense of culture, I found myself musing over what a blessed thing this culture is. During my forced flight across central Asia three and four years ago I always compelled my companions, no matter in what extreme of difficulty we happened to be placed, to wash morning and night and always before partaking of food, to keep their washable garments, few as they were, clean, and to preserve some aesthetic forms or manners at our very simple meals, even though it might be during a Mongolian dinner, when mutton fat was dripping from our elbows. Yet in spite of all these precautions I remember now most clearly that, after some months of wandering, of hunger and cold and of sleeping beside open camp-fires, when we arrived at the house of a colonist who prepared for us real beds with clean sheets and pillow-cases, I was so moved that the tears welled up into my eyes. And some months later, when I saw the electric lights in Urga, I actually wept.

I feel that a member of the white race, consciously struggling for the highest forms of civilization, takes on an actual physiological need of culture and that he really suffers morally from the lack of it, as though he were deprived of the essential conditions of life and were aes-

thetically retrograding. At the same time, a man of culture, after a period of separation from his usual cultural surroundings and the extravagant joy that follows upon a return to them, very easily and swiftly forgets the contrast with hardships and reverts to his former state of mind and fixed habits of thought, an experience which I very clearly proved in my own case. After my wanderings of a year and a half over the mountains, deserts and prairies of the Mongolian region of Asia I arrived at Peking and installed myself in a room in the Hôtel des Wagons-Lits in the Legation Quarter. At first quite enchanted to be back in the surroundings to which I was accustomed and from which the Russian revolution had so abruptly snatched me, after but a few days I found myself beginning to observe that the Chinese service in the dining-room was not all that it might have been and even at times growing a little irritated over it. I remember hauling myself out of these moods, laughing at my sudden refinements and reproaching myself for my ready accumulation of critical tendencies, saying:

"Be quiet, you ungrateful wretch, and enjoy your excellent beefsteaks, tasty salads and cooling ices. Be thankful that a Chinese 'boy' brings you clean napkins and shining plates and remember the days, not so very long ago, when you had to sit by the fire and chase from your over-populated sheepskin irritating neighbors and when you ate meat that would never pass muster with the most lenient of sanitary inspectors!"

"Yes, that is all quite true," my other self argued, "those were bad times; but, just the same, why should

that Chinese who is bringing in a clean napkin for the guest three tables down wipe his perspiring brow with the end of it?"

In the caravanserais of the world, be they in some small Oriental port or in one of the greatest metropolises of the West, there may be cleanliness and even splendor, but the constant passage of men through their courts and the monotonous repetition of stereotyped service robs them of an element which one longs for in life. We were consequently ripe for enjoying the contrast of perfect culture that reigned in this home of the Pariels, the cleanliness, the fine, silent service, the evening dress and the intellectuality which revealed itself at every step—in speech, in movements and in the considerate attitude toward one another.

After the dinner, at which all of the official associates of the Colonel and their wives were present, we talked for a long time, and I was again impressed with the fact that these men, flung by the sowing hand of Chance to the very edge of the Sahara, once more exemplified the fact that those left to depend on themselves for their intellectual life come to possess a broader and deeper knowledge than their seemingly more fortunate brothers who are set down in the centers of civilization and have to pay the price which constant distraction imposes upon their mental life. How these pioneers knew their country—its geology, zoology, botany, history, ethnology and language! All these were studied carefully and in scholarly detail.

In the course of the evening my wife played various violin selections for our hosts, among them some of her

own compositions written and elaborated in Granada. As music is rare in the desert, her playing gave great pleasure to these finely cultured people.

During the afternoon, while we were still some distance from Figig, Colonel Pariel had looked at the sky and predicted rain, though it was quite unusual at this season. Unconventional as it was, when evening fell, with it there came torrents of rain, that still continued in lighter form when I set forth the following morning with my camera to cross the level space separating the French quarter from the native villages. At a distance these all looked quite uniform in appearance with adobe structures showing above the enclosing walls of similar material. The houses, which seemed to be constructed on different architectural lines from those in other parts of Morocco, had strange, open galleries and flat roofs, small iron or wooden doors, through which one could pass only by bending very low, and steps leading down into patios sunk below the level of the street. The inhabitants of the *ksurs* lead their daily lives in these sunken courts, overhung on all four sides by galleries which are usually decked with bunches of golden dates, with ropes of red Turkish peppers and with strings of grapes drying in the sun.

In spite of the rain and dark skies I took some snapshots but was entirely unsuccessful. What is more, the rain lasted during all of our stay in Figig, so that I was unable to secure any good pictures of this extreme outpost. I greatly regretted this, as the oasis is quite unique in character and is surrounded by a high wall set with strange-looking watch-towers, where villagers guard the

dates against the robbers that not infrequently come in from the desert and down from the mountains to make off with this staple of the Arabs.

When I was going out, I noticed a red flag with a green star flying right next to the French colors over the official buildings and later found out that it is the *Khatem Soliman*, or the Star of Solomon, and a new addition to the official insignia of Morocco. The sultan, having learned that the Bolsheviks had also a red flag as their national emblem, ordered this green star to be set in the plain, red field of the Moroccan banner.

During my ramble through the oasis I came upon some interesting zoological specimens, one of which was a small, white squirrel with dark stripes that gave it a close resemblance to the Siberian *burunduk* (*Tamias striatus*). The natives of Figig call it "*rallia*," that is "rock-monkey," a name they have given it owing to the rodent's quickness in jumping about among the rocks; while its Latin name is *Atlantoxerus getulus*. I came across another specimen in the kitchen-gardens of the natives on the plain in the jerboa, or Egyptian jumper, more scientifically known as the *Dipus aegypticus*. There were also varieties of lizards, some of them very brilliant in coloring, almost red; but I was not able to make any intimate study of them, owing to the persisting rain.

After luncheon we went in a party to visit the villages themselves, the largest of which is Zenaga. Narrow, twisted, dark and, at times, very amusing streets burrow like mole-runways between the walls of the houses and under overhanging upper stories, ever twisting and descending or mounting again. In these dark burrows we



saw many native men squatting or lying about, but only two women, and these wrapped from head to foot in dirty bournouses that brushed the ground and hid the feet of these Helens of the desert.

We learned from our French official associates that the inhabitants of all the villages are Berbers and monogamists, while the neighboring nomads from the plains are Arabs from the east and polygamists. The stationary and more stable people of the *ksurs* have often suffered at the hands of the nomads on account of their women, so that now the men of the oasis keep their wives and daughters well guarded under lock and key.

At one point we passed through the *suk* where the major portion of the merchants were Jews, some of whom belonged to very ancient families that traced their lineage back to ancestors who arrived before the tide of Islam swept over the country. Colonel Pariel pointed out to us, as we were passing a small *place*, a mosque with a tall, new minaret and explained that the old one had fallen some years before just at the time when the muezzin was calling the people to prayer. The fact that he escaped with his life and without even a serious bruise, when several Berbers were killed and some houses badly damaged by the falling tower, could only be accepted as a miracle and at once marked the muezzin as a saint and Marabout—a title which he well deserved after his unusual feat.

I was interested, in the course of a visit to a well under one of the houses, to note the structure of the building. The different stories and the galleries were supported by transversals made of palm-wood. As this

has a low coefficient of lateral supporting strength, the length of the beams is restricted to ten feet, owing to which practically all rooms are of uniform dimensions. It also interested me immensely to find that the natives seek to preserve the wood from rotting by wrapping it in layers of dried palm-leaves, just as the Mongols and Tibetans preserve their beams and rafters with the twigs of some local shrub.

In a school that we visited we found the Arab master was instructing the children in geography, history and French, in addition to the rudimentary subjects. The shaved heads of the boys made strenuous efforts to spell acceptably before the consul and the colonel and succeeded fairly well. In another school small children and youths were learning to make artistic embroidery and to decorate leather in gold and colors according to the accepted fashions of Fez and Marrakesh.

Meanwhile, as we wandered about, Colonel Paniel began telling us something of the history of the oasis.

"These seven villages, before their incorporation into the empire of the Moroccan Sultan, were seven separate and independent republics, constantly at war with one another. There existed two very definite reasons for this unceasing hostility: the first, a moral one, that of the vendetta, or blood-revenge; the second, a material one, the struggle for water.

"Do you see those ruins? They were once a village, whose inhabitants skilfully gained possession of the *fog-gara* made by their neighbors for the purpose of leading water to the reserve reservoir on their lands. After a long-continued armed strife the original owners of the

*foggara* finally dug a tunnel under the reservoir of their robbing enemies and blew both it and the village into the air.

“Each of the villages bent every effort to secure water, and the struggle continued among them even down to the time of their allegiance to the sultan. Seeing this and unable to keep the villages in peace, the sultan gave orders for the excavation of a common irrigation canal that should bring the waters of the river to all parts of the oasis and do away with the principal reason for armed hostilities. Though the inhabitants began the common task, the canal was never finished, as another means of circumventing the difficulty was found when the sultan asked from the palm plantations the taxes whose levy led to the formation of an administrative body elected from all classes of the population and to a consequent agreement that the whole network of *foggaras* should become the communal property of the oasis of Figig. Now each plantation has a fixed time at which the water is let into its irrigation canals, and the distribution is automatically regulated by floating valves.”

When visiting the plantations, one cannot look without wonder upon the marvelous subterranean engineering feats of the natives, that represent so much of perseverance and industry and such an extraordinary spirit of invention. Like moles these Berbers have dug tunnels under their lands and villages, driven shafts to permit of cleaning the canals, sunk wells to control the current and the quantity of the water and excavated large subterranean reservoirs with long flights of steps leading down to them. These underground basins are so placed that

water can be led down from them to flow out over the lands and make possible the culture of the dates, figs, pomegranates and grapes that mean sustenance and life to the inhabitants of the oasis. In the stretches not set with trees one finds also small fields of grain and vegetables.

But even with the resolution of the great problem of water and the frequent genial contact there has been between men of the different villages, working in some mole runway underground or laboriously driving a shaft through formations of rock to form an artery for the life-blood of the land, the old enmity has not entirely disappeared, as an evidence of which one can still find families that will not permit marriage with the inhabitants of a neighboring *ksur* and even some men of such obstinate ill-will that they will not deign to enter one of the other settlements.

The delegates from all the villages meet in a neutral place, in the local agora of the Figig council, which gathers in the patio of the square white building that has been erected for this purpose. Owing to this traditional and deep-seated antagonism between the various individuals, these Berbers never can succeed in choosing a chairman acceptable to all, so that they deliberate without one and with such a concomitant of noise, vociferous demonstrations and real parliamentary pandemonium that one would never believe they could come to anything but blows. However, in some mysterious fashion they arrive at an understanding and formulate decisions.

Illustrative of their difficulties, Colonel Pariel recounted to us a very amusing and characteristic case.

"It is not easy to manage all this, for, in addition to hundreds of *kanouns*, or local laws, we have had here to deal with an anarchistic commune. From the original seven distinct factions there afterwards remained, owing to certain economic considerations, only four parties. Following the adoption of a resolution by the council a committee of four, consisting of one member from each of these parties, comes to me and announces the action taken, and through a similar committee I send to the council the expression of my wishes, the text of new laws or regulations and my opposition to, or approval of, their resolutions.

"Once, when I received an official communication from Rabat concerning a new tax, I summoned a meeting of the council and asked that some one should come for a copy of the document forwarded by the government. When four delegates, one from each of the four parties, arrived, I read them the document and sought to hand it to one of them to carry to the council.

" 'I cannot take it,' he said, retreating.

" 'But why?' I asked.

" 'Because for me to carry this paper would imply that I am more important than the others, and we are all equal in the council.'

" 'Yes, Ali Haddar is right,' came as a supporting affirmation from the others.

" 'Then what am I to do?'

" 'Make four copies of the paper and give one to each of us.'

" 'It immediately occurred to me,' continued the Colonel, "that, if all the official documents for the council

should have to be copied in quadruplicate, my staff would have little time for anything else; yet I had to find some way out of the dilemma.

"'Well,' I finally queried, 'then can none of you, neither Ali nor Hadj ben Sliman nor either of you two others, receive or carry this paper?'

"'No, our *kanouns* do not permit it.'

"'But, if I were to give you four copies, would they form the single document sent for your consideration by the sultan?'

"'You speak justly, Sidi.'

"'Very well, then imagine that only one man came to me from the council, but such a one as should have from each party one head, one heart and one hand. If to such a one I should give a paper for him to take in his four hands, holding one of the four corners in each of them, could he carry it to the council in accordance with your *kanouns*?'

"'Such a man with four heads, four hearts and four hands could receive the single paper from you, Sidi.'

"'Well then, it is quite all right; for you four may take this paper and carry it between you, with one at each corner, to the council. May Allah protect you!'

"After a short consultation the delegates decided they could do this and went off, with one holding each corner, to lay the communication from the head of the state before their associates.

"With regard to taxes," Colonel Pariel explained in answer to my question, "the sultan experiences no difficulties, inasmuch as the Koran commands the Faithful to pay tribute to their Master. Real trouble in this respect

could probably occur only with the downfall of Islam, and this is certainly not near."

As I afterward learned, the Figig natives most scrupulously respect private property and the sanctity of the home. For trespass either upon the fields of another or for entering unbidden another's home the culprit is punished by the *cadi* with the levy of a large fine. Murder, on the other hand, often sets going a vendetta between two households, such as the personal history of all Moslem countries so frequently exhibits. These family struggles are one of the principal reasons for the lack of communal and national feeling among the natives. To correct this the legislators of Islam have decreed banishment, sometimes perpetual, for spilled blood, the law requiring that a murderer must at once disappear from his home and village and never return. With the culprit out of their sight, the wronged family may gradually forget him and cease from their efforts for revenge. Then, after some time has passed, the relatives of the murderer may, through the medium of the *cadi*, Imam or Marabout, endeavor to negotiate an approach to the wronged family and to effect an agreement about the *dia*, or the price of blood, after which the two families can partake of food together and become reconciled. Once this accord has been established, the banished one may return, offer gifts to the family of the murdered man and become once more a citizen in good legal standing, after which no one will ever take him to task or remind him of the crime he has perpetrated.

The French authorities experience little difficulty in the execution of their taxation programs so far as the stable

population of the *ksurs* is concerned; but, when they go farther afield among the nomads, they find the task is not such an easy one. In this shifting population the French have to act almost entirely through the caids of the various tribes, who not infrequently profit by their position of power to assist the rich and oppress the poor. But these poorer members of the tribes have ways of defending and protecting themselves, in that they know they will be heard if they come to the offices of the French Administration and report the correct returns of cattle in the herds of the rich. In such cases, when the French officials investigate and confirm the false reports given by the caid, they remove him and propose to the tribe that it elect a successor.

The council of the Figig commune invited Monsieur de Vitasse, Colonel Pariel and ourselves to a formal tea, which proved to be very solemn but which gave me an opportunity of observing some very fine types of men from the different *ksurs* and of hearing many original bits of information about the life of the people.

One of these concerned the burial customs of the oasis, which are quite different from those in any of the other parts of Maghreb. When a Berber who is sick unto death breathes no more, the eldest member of the family approaches and addresses him:

"In the name of Allah, pronounce the words of glory—  
'*La Illah Illah Allah!*'"

If the sick one remain silent, the senior propounds to him a second test:

"If Allah has left a single spark of life in your body, raise up one finger in token that God is One!"



Failing response to this, it is considered that the soul has left the body and that burial preparations should be immediately begun. Without allowing any further period of time to elapse, the relatives quickly prepare the body and carry it to the cemetery for interment. With this most primitive method of determining whether life is extinct, there have occurred, I was told, cases in which men who were still alive have been placed in the ground.

The dead are laid on their sides with their faces toward the *kiblah*, that is, looking in the direction of Mecca. After the burial ceremony the relatives hold a banquet, which resembles very closely the ancient Slavic burial-feast, or *trizna*, the primitive forms of which have been preserved in Russia in the *pominki*. With the Berbers the feast comprises several varieties of *kouskous*, which again marks a parallel with the Russian custom of serving wheat, buckwheat and rice. In this use of the cereal foods the influence of the East is visible, marking a change from the earlier form of *trizna*, at which only a horse or an ox was slaughtered and no vegetable foods whatever were served.

During our subsequent excursions the sun continuously hid itself behind clouds that frequently poured upon us. Under the ever-courteous guidance of Colonel Pariel we visited the whole reach of the neighboring valley of the Zusfana, ran over much of the desert surrounding Figig and, in the course of our several expeditions, at one time came upon a region of serried *aregs*, or low hills in the desert, covered in places with a thin coating of alfa-grass and elsewhere with thousands of Anabasises.

At one point along the river, where the stream cuts

its way through a ravine of naked red and greenish-colored rocks, we could see in the distance the ranges of Jebel Gruz and Jebel el-Maiz. These are rather wild mountains, in which mouflons (*Ovis musimon*) have been plentiful in the past and with them their unwelcome enemy, the panther. But today no great number of these beautiful animals remain, and any hunter who attempts to bring one down will have long and arduous waits before he succeeds, and still more rarely will he come upon a specimen of the stalking feline.

In the neighborhood of Figig other beasts of prey continue from time to time to prowl, especially the guepard (*Cynaelurus jubata*), also known as the chetah, or hunting-leopard. Likewise there are wild cats with very long legs, which are not so savage as their larger relative, the panther, and which are trapped and tamed by the natives to be used in hunting gazelles, jackals and foxes.

With the excursions in the valley and through the surrounding country all accomplished, we spent a very memorable last evening in the home of Colonel and Madame Pariel, when my wife took leave of them and their oasis through the voice of her violin. As she had grown very fond of their verdant island in the desert sea, where we shared and enjoyed the unusual calm of nature, the unruffled life and the hearts of men, she played with unusual depth of feeling and with regret at leaving them all. To this distant, peaceful valley the germs of life's urban maladies do not penetrate; here political storms do not drive men from their homes to take up arms; even the storms of nature, the hurricane and the mad simoon,

almost never rend the peace and calm of the villages set among the palms.

Hearts which have gone through the trials of great pain and trouble, souls which have struggled with the monstrosities and criminal demands of modern life would find their rest here, listening to the soothing, consoling whispers of the leafy palms, to the murmur of running waters and to the song of liquid-throated birds. Amidst all these the low-voiced Berbers, with their strange and primitive morals, not only contribute their element of calm to the picture for the eye but also remind the visitor that life is ever the beautiful gift of Allah and so fleeting that it is a sin to sacrifice the blessed moments of existence to such vitiating currents as jealousy and hate.

From our days in Figig we carry memories of calm and buoyant men, well reconciled to Fate and satisfied with her ministrations; of peaceful *ksurs*, whose internecine strifes have been ended for all time; of the accord set up between the menacing, sterile desert and the fertile, lush oasis, where every man is looked upon as a desired guest, if he but bring with him a pure heart, free from jealousy, and a mind calm and amicable.

It was hard to leave this Figig. When we crossed the line to Beni Unif in Algeria and entered our railway carriage from which we saw the faces of our friends for the last time, our eyes involuntarily turned away to hide their emotion to the brightly colored mountains and the sea of palms, where the welcome silence reigned and in it that calm of spirit and heart which is now so largely lost by men in the life of the world today, as well as a

deep understanding of human suffering and a fine appreciation of beauty and truth. As though all nature were leagued to show us the desert garden at its best, the sun for the first time during our visit appeared from behind the clouds and bathed everything in a blazing, scintillating flood of light.

As our train drew away into Algeria, I gazed out toward the distant north and northwest and in my imagination ran again over the stretches that we had traversed during these last hurried weeks. There near the sea raged the fire of war and hate, which had been kindled by incautious hands and had spread farther and farther, covering town after town and tribe after tribe with the folds of its red mantle. Will it finally reach here, this Figig with its peaceful *ksurs*, its tall palms and its naked, richly colored ranges?

What then will become of those messengers who bring here another fire, a fire lodged in their hearts and kindled by the Creating Hand of a great love and understanding? The light of this fire will in time penetrate through the crumbling wall of darkness into all the distant recesses of life and will triumph as a splendid, strong Conquering Spirit among the yellow, black and white races from one end of the world to the other.

FINIS

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## GLOSSARY

NOTE ON SPELLING—Owing to the marked divergence in the systems of transliterating Arab and African names in general and to the strong tendency of the more current French forms to insinuate themselves into English text, the necessity of adopting some uniform system has been so patent that the only question has been one of finding the standard which most nearly reproduces the native sounds and is authoritative enough to command general acceptance. As the unchallengeable answer has been the work of the Royal Geographical Society of London, its "First General List of African Names," published in December, 1921, by its Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use has been adopted for all names contained in their list and for guidance in the analogous spelling of others that have been included in the text.

For the convenience of the reader a list is here appended of some of the more frequently used Arab and other native words.

Abaiyia—A sleeveless garment worn by nomad women

Abd—A slave

Aïssa—Jesus Christ

Alem—A scholar; a sage

Al-lugha—The divine language of the Koran

Andaluza—The name of a song as well as of a dance in  
southern Spain

Arraf—A seer

Bairam—The great Moslem feast

Barakka—a sarcophagus; a blessing

Berrania—A foreigner

Bled—A village

Bournous—An ordinary cloak or mantle with sleeves and  
a cowl

Cadi—A magistrate or judge

Chouse—An interpreter, doorkeeper or attendant in a  
Morocco office

Dia—Compensation for murder; blood-money

Duar—An encampment

Fasi—Inhabitants of the town of Fez

Foggara—A subterranean channel for water

Fonduk—An inn; a store

Garnata—A Moorish song, so called from the early name  
of Granada

Gitun—A tent

Hafidh—A scholar, versed in, and able to quote fluently  
from, the Koran

Hadith—The body of Moslem tradition regarding Ma-  
homet

Hadj—The pilgrimage to Mecca and a Mohammedan  
who has made it

Haik—A part of a woman's dress which covers the face;  
a part of a man's bournous

Hammam—A warm spring



- Horm—Prohibition to enter  
Insh Allah—If God wills  
Isawa—The followers of the Prophet Jesus  
Jellaba—A mantle with a cowl  
Jmel—A camel  
Kafla—A Caravan  
Kahina—A prophetess  
Kaldoun—An Arab dentist  
Kasba—A fortress or fortified tribal enclosure  
Kfen—A man's shirt  
Kiblah—The direction toward Mecca  
Kisaria—The market-place  
Kumia—A poignard  
Kouskous—A national dish of wheat gruel cooked with  
    meat or fat  
Ksur—A village  
Kubba—A chapel with a tomb  
Lalla—A lady; a saint  
Madih—Religious poetry  
Maghreb—West; a name for Morocco  
Marabout—A sorcerer or prophet revered as a saint  
Medersa—A higher theological school  
Medina—The Arab quarter of the town  
Mellah—The Jewish part of the town  
Meskin—A beggar  
Meshwi—A sheep roasted on a spit  
Minbar—A Moslem curate  
Mokkhadem—The chief of a religious fraternity  
Muderres—A scholar; a professor  
Muezzin—A priest of a lower grade  
Mullah—A priest

Mumen—An orthodox Moslem

Nasrani—A Christian

Patio—A court

Reshid—A Moslem strict in his religious principles

Rumi—A European

Sahn—Interior court of a mosque

Seffa—Sweet *kouskous*

Sekkaia—A fountain

Sherif—A descendant of the Prophet

Sidi—Sir; master

Sof—Clan; caste

Suk—A street or market where only one kind of merchandise is made or sold

Surat—A verse from the Koran

Taam—Sweet *kouskous*

Tabout—A sarcophagus

Thaleb—A student; plural, *tholba*

Ulema—Plural for *alem*, scholar

Wad—A river

Wali—A saint

Zaouia—A chapel; a little mosque

Zitun—An olive-tree

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